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# THE HOMILIST.

BY

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF THE "BIBLICAL LITURGY," "PHILOSOPHY OF HAPPINESS," "GENIUS OF THE GOSPEL," "COMMENTARY ON ACTS OF APOSTLES," ETC., ETC.

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## A HOMILY

ON

### *Life: a Week-day Homily for Thoughtful Men.*

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“For what is your life.”—James iv. 14.

  
WHAT meaning there is in many of the words that are in commonest use in human language! They slip quite glibly between our lips, and the fulness of their significance never for an instant is present to our thought. From the pebbles at the bottom of some stream there is no reflection of the wonderful course of those drops of water—the strange changes through which they have passed, the journey they have come, the destination whither they ceaselessly flow. We, like these pebbles, only let the words of speech pass over us, without heeding the mighty and complex meanings which the words possess.

Now, take that word life—no commoner word in our vocabulary—but who knows, who can tell all that it signifies? Life in all its forms ; in plant, in animal, in spirit ; the motion and the activity of the world ; the growth of tree and flower and grass ; the ceaseless change of beast and bird and fish ; the thoughts, the purposes, the doings

of man ; the unseen weavings of the web of existence in the whole spiritual world.

Now let us think a little of our own life—the life of man upon this earth. What is that? How can we express it ; how can we unfold much that lies within it? Can we find any law, any purpose? Whence came it? Has it issues beyond itself? Is there another life? Are past and future mere words ; presents that have been, presents that will be—out of all relation with each other—no links between the moments, the days, the years, the ages ; or is the whole one, and indivisibly bound by inexorable bonds of cause and effect, purpose and destiny? Let us, I say, view this life—this life which, in the universality of us, makes up cities and nations, society and the world ; which throws out of itself art and commerce, and science and law, to be by the slow progress of the times re-absorbed and lost in the ever active life. In thought one may clamber to the top of some elevated building, say the city cathedral. Life lies beneath us. It is daytime, and the streets are full, the shops are busy ; there they hurry and press and drive. Men are eating, drinking, buying, selling. There is the river with its freighted ships, links with other cities and other people. There are the courts of justice, where life is restraining its own wildness. There is building. Yonder a man, with throbbing brow and aching heart, adding to the riches of your art, or science, or literature. See, here is a chamber where life is beginning—there a church, where men are praying, singing, listening to some talk about another life ; or it may be, marrying and giving in marriage. Here money is passing from hand to hand ; there some wretches are toiling for the pittance society allows to those who have got to its very skirts, and whom such toil will soon send out of life altogether. There is a horrid crowd, jeering, laughing, waiting for some spectacle of justice. It is night, and life is now colored with motions and feelings of a new and changed type. The shadows are deeper, the lights more

variegated and confused. There is fun and frolic, dance and song ; there vice and mad tumult. Here the pious pleasures and calm peace of home ; yonder the shrinking of the outcast, the sad weary hungers for rest of the houseless and the starving. Hush, what scene is that amidst it all ? There are tears and anxious looks, there are bewildered children and grave men, women whose hearts are bursting, but who are calm in the discharge of an almost divine ministrations. Is that life that we see—weak, fainting, blurred ? Yes, all life ; life beginning, life ending. And we come down from our altitude, and in our quiet chambers, and to our hearts, ask, Well what is all this ; what is our life ?

Now, we shall attempt no definition of it. Definitions are difficult and dangerous ; but we have summoned several before us, and asked them what they thought this life was. Give us your philosophy, or, if you like, your practical view of it.

And the first was a man of grave and serious aspect, his brow was marked by thought ; his eye was alight with an illumination that seemed by its depth of lustre to come from far hidden sources. He called himself the natural philosopher or man of science. He was very learned in the elements and laws of nature ; to him the world was as an open book. He read it with delight, revelled in the richness of the known, hoped with almost the ardent expectations of a lover in the joys which still lay in the unexplored. He had with him a furnace and crucible ; he had tests, and scales, and compasses ; he was armed with knife, and hammer, and glass. By these he could examine and reduce ; he could watch, explore, apply the laws known, test the laws suggested. In this way he had examined the earth, the air, the sky. He passed to the flower and the tree ; he found there processes which physical and chemical laws already found in earth and water might explain ; with similar thoughts he explored the secrets of animal organization and life. He was satisfied with fact and law ; constant sequence,

invariable result. There certainly was, now and then, an exception, but the exception with tireless activity he explored, and found it only part of some higher law, that which in the great train of physical consequence it was his honor to discover and assert. He was then asked what he thought of life—of human life—of the individual, of the man. It was the same answer—the answer of the anatomist's knife, the microscope, the scales, the compass. What is, is the question. What has been, he seeks. Law inexorable, though complicated and often times elusive, is still the grand philosophy of the whole. Life is force—force of gravity, force of magnetism, force of nerve. It is still a resolution to atoms and chemical law.

"And what is death?" we ask him. "Oh!" he says, "a mere matter of averages, a mere change of disposition in the place and play of forces. It has nothing in it more than in the change of any other physical condition or place; certain powers have gained the ascendancy in one place, but they have lost it in another. It is still cause and effect, sequence and consequence."

"And is there any other life?" I ask. "What do you mean?" he says, with wonderment. "Will something like this go on in the future?" "Why, of course there will. The race is immortal—that is to say, life is immortal, for of course the species man may go out like any other species, probably will, to make room for some higher being, higher in organization, that is, more complex—under the dominance of a larger number of laws, and perhaps taking up more physical atoms." And then you press him. "No, no," you say, "shall *I*, will *you*, be immortal? When we come to that change of force as you call it, shall we go on, so that we shall know that there was that change in us? In a word, is this life which you so define and describe, is it something apart really from me who think about it, and cling to it, and fear it, and shrink from losing it? Then, I am sorry to say, our friend takes refuge in poetry and words that we cannot understand,

unless he says straight out, "No, nothing after death ; man eternal, but men mortal." He talks about absorption into the infinite, a return of ourselves to God, the central force of the whole, and such-like mist, where, in a sad and weary perplexity, we must fain leave him and all his teaching about life.

And now we summon another to our questioning ; perhaps he will help us some little in our quest. This man is somewhat of a double character. His appearance is often changed ; at times his dress is of a sober, useful sort, the dress of one who works and knows what work means. His face is then firm, the lines of the mouth mean effort and will. There is pre-occupation in the eye, and indomitable determination in every word and act. At other times the garb is one of holiday attire. The face is relaxed, the eye lights up with pleasure, and there may now and then be an excitement and flush in the cheek, and a thrill of delight in every member. At such times the gait is more of the dance than the walk. The speech is often song, and not infrequently laughter mad and merry is heard. Now this man is known as "the worldling" by certain people. Secularist others call him. He himself, perhaps, has no very distinctive word for himself, but he maintains so good an opinion of himself, that perhaps he can afford to do without a distinctive name. There is an old book that has something in it about "men of this world, who have their portion in this life," and perhaps that pretty nearly describes him.

But whatever they are called, you know whom I mean, and they would themselves recognise their portraiture. Now these men have an opinion of life, and one quite as marked and definite as the philosopher. They will tell you that life is to be used, and to be enjoyed, and our great end is happiness, the satisfaction of certain wants of our nature, and a pleasant occupation of our active powers.

Life to this man, who represents a class, is what our great poet represents one of his characters as describing the world.

The world is his oyster ; it has to be opened ; what it contains is to be enjoyed. Life is then to the worldling the mere opportunity of—indeed it is the thing itself—the occupation of himself, and the pleasure, or, as he calls it, the happiness which he thus gains.

What is its meaning ? just ask him. “Meaning,” he says, “why it is its own meaning.” What is its issue ? whence and whither ? “Oh,” he replies, “don’t tease me with such questions as these. I know the present, I have that, I will make the most of it, and leave the future to take care of itself. ‘Death,’ you say—well, that is of course an ugly word. It is rather frightful.” That part of life he does not much care to think about. It had better be dismissed. He does not exactly say, “Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die” ; but he does say, “Soul, take thy ease, thou hast many goods laid up for many years. Eat, drink, and be merry.”

We now summon a third, who shall give us his view of this life. He is an elderly man of studious mien. There is a quiet gravity upon his countenance that might seem dulness, were it not for the sharp penetration of his eye, and a slight curl about the corner of the mouth, that tells of humour with a tinge of sarcasm and wit, which now and then play across its lines. His speech is choice, and not a little sententious. He carries his head erect, and there is a trace of scorn and even contempt in the glance with which he examines the scenes and events of human living. He is the moralist, the social philosopher. He investigates mind and manners, customs and social life. He is a severe critic, and not seldom his censure is meted out with no stint or hesitancy. He takes an important place in the social circle. Nervous people are a little afraid of him. Busy men avoid him, and men of pleasure very often wince under his scathing words.

Well, and what does he think of life ? He will tell you that it is something to be studied—not with the painful analysis of the natural philosopher—not something just to be used or enjoyed, but rather looked at and talked about.

He certainly enjoys it in his quiet way ; but he takes his pleasure soberly. And after all the study, what does he make of it ? Perhaps he agrees most nearly with the royal sage, who gave it as his experience, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” On the whole, he will tell you that life is a mistake. But being in it, we may as well try to make it as good as we can. Balance the good and the evil. If you can get the good out of it, well ; and if you cannot, well, it does not much matter. It will soon be over ; and the sooner it is over the sooner to sleep. Business is all very well, but it is very tiring. Pleasure is the thing for those that like it ; but it is not worth the trouble. Right or wrong, they are just names that men use for ticketing what they like or dislike. Home and home life is very dull and very quiet. Public life is a great vexation and weariness. Just be quiet, and take things as they come. Criticise your neighbours. Tell the world what is best for it. If they listen, very good ; if not, it is not much matter ; and then, when death comes, just take it quietly, and go out into silence and darkness with as little fuss as may be.

Well, you ask, and what then ? “Oh, I do not know,” he will answer. “I cannot criticise that, and have nothing to say about it. My rules and laws and principles have to do with this life. I never met anyone who had been in that other country of which you talk. It is not a very pleasant topic. There is little room for moralizing, or humour ; and if you are writing about it, there are some good sort of people who do not quite like it, and so I prefer saying nothing at all about it, to saying what is rather foolish or else unpleasant.”

“And that is your notion of life, is it, sir ?” “Well, yes. I am much at heart with the king whom you have just quoted. ‘In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity, consider : God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. All things have I seen in the days of my

vanity : there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness. Be not righteous over much ; neither make thyself over wise : why shouldest thou destroy thyself ? Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish : why shouldest thou die before thy time ?' On the whole, 'my son, be admonished.' Even when I review my own life, 'of making many books there is no end ; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.' 'Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities ; all is vanity.' And so say I."

But there are men who take yet another view of life. They are of all ranks, all classes, various degrees of intelligence, engaged in all the labours which earth affords, of all ages and all climes. I don't know that there is any very distinctive mark about them. Perhaps the best specimens of the class are remarkable chiefly for a completeness and all roundness of character and disposition. The face is bright, cheerful, but betokens the presence of some guiding law. Content and peace and the quieter characteristics of enjoyment are depicted. There is at times an abstraction in the demeanour, as if thought and spirit were for the moment away from the circumstances immediately surrounding them ; but they can exhibit a directness and energy which make them amongst the most successful of the workers of the world. They are called by different names. In ridicule, some give them the title of the "saints." A general word for them is "religious." More definitely and precisely they are Christians.

Now what, we ask, is the Christian view of life? In the first place it is looked at as something which must be judged. There are distinct and marked differences in it, denoted by terms, right and wrong, good and evil. These are in conflict. The victory must be on one side. The side that we are to take is that of the right and the good. Then, besides this, life is looked at as something separate from those who are living it. It will cease, but they will remain. Results upon

them are continually accruing from this life, and those they will take with them, and keep for ever.

Now besides this, they look at life as being the result of the meeting of certain wills—their own in the numberless complexities of human society, but together with those one supreme, eternal, ever-acting Will, who strives with, sometimes against, leading, withholding, checking, stimulating the wills of men. To this supreme Will, which is God, they hold that man owes allegiance, and therefore there must be a judgment of the one upon the many. And then, finally, they look at this life as being anything but final. It is really a preparation—that life in the fullest, truest sense only begins when this life closes, but that the conduct of the present has an infinite influence upon the condition of that future. They raise life, therefore, altogether out of the sphere of the merely physical, sensuous, emotional, or even moral. It becomes a thing of eternal meaning, with hopes, aims, motives drawn from the unseen and the eternal world.

Let us then in a few words sum up the idea of life. It is something to be done, something to be enjoyed, but to be done and enjoyed under the ever-present thought of a life which comes out of it, built upon it as a foundation, growing from it as a germ, flowing from it as a source.

They recognise the presence of God in this life; true, a presence which has been much dimmed and overshadowed by a terrible moral catastrophe which has befallen the human race; a catastrophe against the results of which it is the grand prerogative of a man to fight in all and every side and phase of his existence; but which to help him in the battle, and indeed to make the victory possible, even certain, the love and grace of the God, who is also a Divine Father, has met by an act of overwhelming compassion and power, redemptive, pardoning, sanctifying. This grand act, which gives the very name to Christian life, is the rich source of all that is great, and noble, and true. It is this which makes life as a preparation certain, yea, even a prelude and an

earnest of that life to come. Over and above this there is the constant gift of the Divine Spirit as a companion and a helper for the struggling man. Life is now a glory and a blessing. Man cries when he is born the son of man, but the cry is quickly changed into the exultant shout of the son of God. Life is now not the crucible of the man of science, the mere workshop of the human engineer, the mad bowl of Circe's drink which befools and curses the voluptuary, nor yet a puzzle and a study for the grim philosopher, but it is the home of man and God ; it is the school for heaven ; it is a march joyous and triumphant of the human soldiers to their city which is on high. What is our life ? Ask the Christian, and he will tell you that.

London.

LLEWELYN D. BEVAN, LL.B.

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EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

"We all complain," says the philosopher Seneca, "of the shortness of time, and yet we have more than we know what to do with. Our lives are spent either in doing nothing at all, or in doing nothing to the purpose, or in doing nothing that we ought to do. We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end of them."

Alfred the Great was one of the wisest, the best, and most beneficent monarchs that ever swayed the sceptre of this realm, and his example is highly memorable. Every hour of his life had its peculiar allotted business. He divided the day and night into three portions of eight hours each, and though much afflicted with a very painful disorder, he assigned only eight hours to sleep, meals, and exercise ; devoting the remaining sixteen, one half to reading, writing, and prayer, and the other to public business. So sensible was this great man that time was not a trifle to be dissipated, but a rich talent entrusted to him, for which he was accountable to the great Dispenser of it.

Gassendi, the celebrated philosopher, was perhaps one of the hardest students that ever existed. He generally rose at three o'clock in the morning, and read or wrote till eleven, when he received the visits of his friends. He afterwards, at twelve, made a very slender dinner, at which he drank nothing but water, and sat down to his books again at three. There he remained till eight o'clock, and after having eaten a very light supper, he retired to bed at ten.

KNOWLES.

# Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

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**OUR PURPOSE.**—Many learned and devout men have gone *Philologically* through this TEHILIM, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough HOMILETIC treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

**OUR METHOD.**—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1.) The HISTORY of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character, and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words, is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2.) ANNOTATIONS of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3.) The ARGUMENT of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4.) The HOMILETICS of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavor so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

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## *Subject: THE FEELINGS OF THE GOOD IN RELATION TO THE SUBJUGATION OF EVIL.*

“The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord ;  
 And in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice !  
 Thou hast given him his heart’s desire,  
 And hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.  
 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness :  
 Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.  
 He asked life of thee,  
 And thou gavest it him,  
 Even length of days for ever and ever.  
 His glory is great in thy salvation :  
 Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.  
 For thou hast made him most blessed for ever :  
 Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.  
 For the king trusteth in the Lord ;  
 And through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.  
 Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies ;  
 Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.  
 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven  
 In the time of thine anger :  
 The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath,  
 And the fire shall devour them.  
 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth,  
 And their seed from among the children of men.

For they intended evil against thee ;  
 They imagined a mischievous device,  
 Which they are not able to perform :  
 Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back,  
 When thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings  
 against the face of them.  
 Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength :  
 So will we sing and praise thy power.—Psa. xxi.

**HISTORY.**—This Psalm was evidently composed to celebrate some great anniversary, such as the birthday, the accession of the king, or some signal victory. It seems highly probable that it follows in chronological order the preceding Psalm, and celebrates the triumphant issue of the battle on which the king was about to embark. The preceding Psalm was before the battle, this after. There is a little difference in the tone of each. “There is less devotion in this : it speaks less of God than of the king. It is also more exultant : the one is like a litany, the other a pean. The one tells the eve of an army’s actual departure for the scene of war : it reflects the anxious earnest thoughts of those who feel what they have at stake in the contest ; the other breathes the joyous confidence of the nation and their scorn for the threats of the foe. In the peaceful quiet of their homes they can still hope that the terror of their first appearance will drive the foe from the field, and that when they march forth it will be rather as ministers of offended justice than as combatants in a hard fought fight.” Hengstenberg, however, thinks that the Psalm is an expression of thanksgiving of the people for the promises given to David in 2 Saml. vii., and their joyful hope in regard to their fulfilment. This is also the view of Alexander. There is, of course, no way of reaching certainty on the point.

**ANNOTATIONS.**—“*To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.*” The structure of the Psalm indicates the correctness of the former inscription, and the accuracy of the latter is rendered obvious by its agreement with the general style and spirit of David’s compositions.

*Ver. 1.*—“*The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!*” Some consider that David is here speaking of himself in the third person. It is more natural, however, to regard it as the language of the people.

*Ver. 2.*—“*Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.*”—“The arrangement here,” says Luther, “is certainly fine, namely, that the prayer of the heart must go before, without which the prayer of the lips is an unprofitable bawling.” The prayer referred to according to the judgment of many able critics is that contained in 2 Sam. vii. 18—29.

*Ver. 3.*—“*For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness.*” “For thou wilt come before him with blessings of goodness.” The word “prevent” is now commonly used amongst us in the sense “stop,” “hinder,” “obstruct,” but this is neither the original meaning of the

word nor the sense in which it is used in the Bible. It means to "go before," "anticipate," "precede." Some render the clause, "thou fore-stallest him with choicest blessings." "Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head." This does not refer to the time of his coronation, but to the victory which he had just achieved. The victory was as a crown of gold to him.

Ver. 4.—"He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him." The life which he asked was not the longevity of himself, but the longevity of his throne. "Even length of days for ever and ever." The continuation of his race as a regal power in Judea, he prayed for and he had: even beyond his hopes in the person who was of "the seed of David according to the flesh." Mercy transcended his prayers.

Ver. 5.—"His glory is great in thy salvation." "Great is his power in thy saving help. He has obtained great power through thee. "Honor and majesty hast thou laid upon him." A more honored man than David never existed. As a king he was the representative of Divine authority, as a warrior the executioner of Divine justice, and as father the ancestor of Him whose Kingdom is to spread over the world, and have no end.

Ver. 6.—"For thou hast made him most blessed for ever." Margin "set him to be blessings." The idea is that he had been made a blessing, a fountain of good to others. Blessings for the world flowed through him. "Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." Margin "gladdened him with joy." He will be gladdened with God's gracious looks and presence.

Ver. 7.—"For the king trusted in the Lord; and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved." Because he trusted in Jehovah, he would not only be imperturbed in spirit, but established in authority. His Kingdom would last. "The use of the third person," says Alexander, "in this verse, with reference both to God and the king, makes it a kind of connecting link between the direct address to God in the first part of the Psalm, and the direct address to the king in the second."

Ver. 8.—"Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee." The people now tell the king what he was to hope for, himself and his posterity, in consequence of the Divine promise. "To find out" means to detect, to reach.

Ver. 9.—"Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger; the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them." The ascription of this destroying agency to God shows that the king was regarded merely as the instrument of Jehovah, and that the enemies of the theocracy were the enemies of God himself, and would be punished.

Ver. 10.—"Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from the children of men."—"Their fruit shalt thou root out of the earth and their seed from among the children of men." The idea is entire extermination.

Ver. 11.—"For they intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device which they are not able to perform." "According to many

expositors," says Hengstenberg, "the wickedness of the godless must here be announced as the cause of their destruction. But then it would be unsuitable to say, they are not able for it. We must rather make out the connection thus: for although they threaten destruction to thee, yet they cannot execute their designs; these shall rather turn out to their own destruction, as certainly as God has secured perpetuity to the kingdom of David."

Ver. 12.—"Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them." The word "back" is in the margin, "shoulder." David is here represented as a warrior with a bow in hand, and arrows upon the string, going forth to confront his enemies. And what is declared in the verse is that God would make them turn their backs, and utterly confound and banish them.

Ver. 13.—"Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power." These words express a strong desire that Jehovah should be exalted over all his foes. "Be exalted, Jehovah, in thy strength: O let us sing and praise thy power."

**ARGUMENT.**—This Psalm contains three parts:—Thanksgiving, expectation, and prayer. 1. Thanksgiving for conquest over some enemies (ver. 1—7); 2. Expectation for conquest over more (ver. 8—12); and 3. Prayer for the conquest of all (ver. 13).

**HOMILETICS.**—This Psalm is full of war. There is the war spirit, ruthless and bloody, and the war victims exterminated, confounded, and burning. The material wars that David and his people undertook by the command and under the direction of God, were unquestionably right. Whatever the Creator wills, is right for the creature to do. First: *It was right in God to take away the lives of sinners.* Indeed, He who gave life has a right to take it away, whether sinful or not. But in the case of sinners the right becomes an obligation. Justice demands that transgressors of Divine law should be punished even unto death. Secondly: *It was right in God to take away the lives of sinners by whatever means He pleased.* He might employ famines, pestilences, earthquakes, angels, or men. If He choose to employ Joshua or David, rather than the elements of nature or angelic beings, who could doubt His right to do so? These two facts justify the wars of the Old Testament. The men who were destroyed by the war rightly deserved their punishment, and the men who were employed in the war were men whom heaven employed as officers to execute their doom. No war, how-

ever, is ever justifiable unless it is ordered and directed by God ; and this we believe He has ceased to do ever since Christ came into the world, and became the Divine Legislator for mankind.

We shall use the material war in this Psalm as material wars are often used in the Old Testament and in the New too, as emblems of the moral—the war against error, immorality, and ungodliness. The Psalm, looked upon in this light, exhibits the feelings of the good in relation to the enemies of truth and God. *And in it you have thanksgiving for the conquest of some, expectations for the conquest of more, and desire for the conquest of all.* Here you have—

**I THANKSGIVING FOR A VICTORY OVER SOME ENEMIES.** The first seven verses bear an exultant reference of the people to some great victory that David had won: “Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.” He had just come out of a battle as a triumphant conqueror. There are three things in relation to the conquest which he had just won which are ever associated with true moral conquests.

First: *His conquest was a source of joy.* “The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord : and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice !” What joy on earth is equal to the joy of that man who feels that he has conquered some wrong that is dishonoring his Maker and cursing his race ? How jubilant is the man who feels he has overcome the devil in his own soul, and how exultant he who feels that he has delivered others from the damning despotism of evil !

Secondly: *His conquest was of Divine Mercy.* “THOU hast given him his heart’s desire.” Whatever the prowess of his heart, the skilfulness of his arm, the wisdom of his plans, and his earnestness and ability in carrying them into effect, it was God that gave him the victory. The success was of mercy. (1.) Divine mercy went before him. “Thou preventest him with blessings of goodness.” Divine mercy forestalled him : went before him into the field, made his way clear, and guaranteed victory. (2.) Divine mercy transcended his prayers. “He asked life of Thee, Thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.” All this is true of the moral warrior : his vic-



achieved over depravity the more may we  
five reasons. First: Because the opposition  
the enemy; so much power lies on the side  
ondly: Because the weapons are impregnable.  
Gospel truth—remains uninjured and impregnable.  
Thirdly: Because the resources are impregnable.  
a beam called the sinew of physical war. Hence  
chequer and you paralyse the arm of the warrior.  
sources in moral warfare are God's love, wisdom, strength  
fluence. Fourthly: Because the enemies already over-  
come are inveterate, invincible, better armed, and better  
ian those which Christianity has already conquered.  
because every new conquest not only increases the  
the enemy but increases the army of the true. The  
from victories already achieved we are justified in expecting  
brilliant victories in the future. "Greater things shall  
shall ye see." Here you have—

III. *Desire for a victory over an adversary.*  
exalted, Lord, in Thine own strength." This means  
desire for the universal subjugation of all men to the  
authority of the Great God. It means this—*Lord, we  
come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven.*  
The people praise These, O God, let all the people of this  
the time shall come when "the kingdoms of this world

become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ." His  
time—  
be argued—First: From the adaptability which God employs. Second:  
Christianity has already achieved fully progressive changes occurring  
And, Fourthly: From the un-

the Holy Word.

tories are all of grace—mercy goes before him, mercy transcends his prayers.

Thirdly : *His conquest exalted him to honor.* “His glory is great in thy salvation : honor and majesty hast Thou laid upon him.” What is the glory of the physical conqueror compared with that of the moral ? Who is the most honorable man ! He who destroys the bodies of men or he who destroys the evils that curse body and soul ? He who mantles the world with clouds, or he who brightens the firmament with stars of truth and love ? The moral hero shall have a crown of glory that fadeth not away. “He that overcometh,” &c.

Fourthly : *His conquest was connected with his trust in God.* “For the King trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.” David was a man of great trust in God. We are told that he encouraged himself in the Lord his God ; and we hear him exclaim, “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer : my God and strength in whom I will trust.” There is no moral victory without deep and practical trust in God. Trust in him as our “Commander,” our “shield,” and “buckler.” Here you have—

**II. EXPECTATION OF A VICTORY OVER MORE ENEMIES.** From the victories that David had won the people predicted greater. “Thine hand shall find out all Thine enemies : Thy right hand shall find out those that hate Thee.” The past conquest they looked at as a pledge of future triumphs. There is a sanguinary savageness in the description of the anticipated victories which is most revolting to our natures, and thoroughly antagonistic to the genius of the Gospel dispensation. What terrible language is the following :—“Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger : the Lord shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt Thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.”

The only point here, therefore, which illustrates the moral warfare of the good is this—*past victories a ground for expecting greater.* The Psalmist concludes that, because so much had been accomplished, so much more would be yet achieved ; and this holds pre-eminently true in moral campaigns. The more victories

are achieved over depravity the more may we expect, and that for five reasons. First: *Because the opposition is weakened.* Every fresh man converted is a soldier taken from the ranks of the enemy; so much power lost on the side of the foe. Secondly: *Because the weapons are uninjurable.* Unlike the sword of steel, which wears out with use, the sword of the Spirit—Gospel truth—remains uninjured and uninjurable from age to age. Thirdly; *Because the resources are inexhaustible.* Money has been called the sinew of physical wars. Exhaust a nation's exchequer and you paralyze the arm of the warrior; but the resources in moral warfare are God's love, wisdom, strengthening influence. Fourthly: *Because the enemies already overcome were as great as any remaining.* It is impossible to conceive of foes more inveterate, invincible, better armed, and better drilled than those which Christianity has already conquered. Fifthly: *Because every new conquest not only weakens the ranks of the enemy but increases the army of the true.* Thus, then, from victories already achieved we are justified in expecting more brilliant victories in the future, “Greater things than these shall ye see.” Here you have—

III. DESIRE FOR A VICTORY OVER ALL ENEMIES. “Be Thou exalted, Lord, in Thine own strength.” This means virtually a desire for the universal subjugation of all men to the righteous authority of the Great God. It means this—“Let Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven.” “Let the people praise Thee, O God, let all the people praise Thee.” The time shall come when “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.” That such a time will come may be argued—First: From the adaptation of the moral instrumentality which God employs. Secondly: From the triumphs which Christianity has already achieved. Thirdly: From the wonderfully progressive changes occurring in the history of mankind. And, Fourthly: From the unequivocal declarations throughout the Holy Word.

## A Homiletic Glance at the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

The Student is requested to keep in mind the following things which will throw much light upon the Epistle. First: The circumstances of the writer when he wrote. He was a prisoner in Rome. During his residence there, in "his own hired house" (Acts xxviii. 30, 31), from the spring A. D. 61 to 63, he wrote the Epistles to the Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians. It is generally supposed that this Epistle to the Ephesians was the first he wrote during his imprisonment. Secondly: The circumstances of the persons addressed. They lived, it is thought, in Ephesus, an illustrious city in the district of Iona, nearly opposite the island of Samos, and about the middle of the western coast of the peninsula commonly called Asia Minor. It had attained in Paul's day such a distinction as in popular estimation to be identified with the whole of the Roman province of Asia. It was the centre of the worship of the great goddess Diana. Paul resided here on two different occasions. The first, A. D. 54, for a very short period (Acts xviii. 19-21); the second, for a period of more than two years. The persons therefore addressed in this letter are those whom he had converted from paganism, and in whom he felt all the interest of a spiritual father. Thirdly: The purpose of the letter. The aim of the Epistle seems to be to set forth the origin and development of the Church of Christ, and to impress those Ephesian Christians, who lived under the shadow of the great temple of Diana, with the unity and beauty of a temple transcendently more glorious. For the minute critical exegesis of this apostolic encyclical, we direct our readers to the commentaries of Alford, Webster and Wilkinsoп, Jowett, Harless, Stier, Eadie, Hodge, and last, though not least, Ellicott. Our aim will be to draw out, classify, and set in homiletic order, the Divine ideas reached by the critical aid of such distinguished scholars.

### Subject: CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."—Eph. v. 8-10.

ANNOTATIONS.—Ver. 8.—"For ye were sometimes darkness"—σκότος, "darkness;" not merely living or abiding in it (comp. Rom. ii. 19; 1 Thess. v. 4), but themselves actual and veritable darkness. "But now are ye light in the Lord"—φῶς εἰν Κυρίῳ. They who were once not in darkness, but darkness itself, are now not merely in the light, but the light itself in the Lord—in fellowship with the Lord. Hare says, "the sinner is darkness; he and darkness may define one another." "Walk as children of the light." This expression is used in John xii. 36. It is a sublime description of genuine Christians. God is light, and they are His children.

Ver. 9.—"For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." The word "Spirit" here should be Light. It is so in all the oldest MSS. The idea is that the results of true divine illumination are "goodness"—αγαθωσύνη—this means benevolence; "righteous"—δικαιοσύνη, this means rectitude; and "truth"—ἀληθεια, this means

reality. Meyer observes that the "whole of Christian morality is here presented under its three great aspects: the good, the right, the true."

Ver. 10.—"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." This verse is grammatically connected with the eighth; the ninth is a parenthesis. It should read, "Walk as children of light, proving," &c.—*περιπατεῖτε—δοκιμάζοτες*. The last word means to test, to examine. Thus it is said, "The fire shall try every man's work." God is said to try every man.

**HOMILETICS.**—These verses present to us the Christian life in its *transformation, obligation, and demonstration.*

**I. TRANSFORMATION.** A true Christian is one who has been changed from darkness into light. The figurative language implies—First: A change from immorality to holiness. "Darkness" is the emblem of depravity. "They that be drunken are drunken in the night." The ghastly legions of hell win their most terrible victories in the gloom and silence of night. The "light" is a symbol of purity. Secondly: A change from ignorance to knowledge. Darkness clouds our vision, and hides from us the world in which we live. Man in an unregenerated state is in the moral world as a man in midnight. "Light" is a symbol of intelligence. Thirdly: A change from sadness to joy. Darkness is depressing. Even the irrational creatures feel its dejecting power. Sin is sadness; true religion is joy. We are told that there is "no night in heaven." It means that there is no immorality, no ignorance, no sorrow there. How great the change that has taken place in a true Christian man!

**II. OBLIGATION.** Two duties are here indicated—First: *Walking in light.* "Walk as children of light." Don't go back into darkness. Nay, don't remain in the twilight of Christian experience, but step farther and farther into the day. Leave the valleys, scale the hills, and come more directly under the broad beams of day. To walk in the light is to walk intelligently, safely and joyously. Secondly: *Pleasing God.* The ninth verse being parenthetical, the last clause of the eighth verse should be read with the tenth, "Walk as children of light, proving what is acceptable (well pleasing) unto the Lord." "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed with the renewing of your mind, that ye

may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. ii. 12.)

The expression "well pleasing" to God throws a light upwards on God, and downwards on man. (1.) It reveals God. It indicates ( $\alpha$ ) His moral *susceptibility*. He is not indifferent to the moral conduct of His creatures. It indicates ( $\beta$ ) His *forgiving mercy*. Man, though a sinner, can, through His infinite mercy, render himself acceptable to Him. (2.) It reveals man. ( $\alpha$ ) It indicates the highest end of his being. What higher object can a creature have than to please the Creator? ( $\beta$ ) It indicates the highest blessedness of his being. The smile of the Creator is the heaven of the creature.

**II. DEMONSTRATION.** The Christian man develops in his life certain glorious things. "The fruit of the Spirit (Light) in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." First: He demonstrates in his life Divine *beneficence*. "In all goodness." He is full of social love, tender, compassionate, self-sacrificing. Secondly: He demonstrates in his life Divine *righteousness*. He is a man of inflexible honesty, unswerving rectitude. In him the "righteousness of the law is fulfilled." Thirdly: He demonstrates in his life Divine *reality*. His thoughts, sympathies, actions, are in harmony with the eternal realities of being. He is neither a visionary nor a hypocrite. His thoughts are true, his life is sincere,

**CONCLUSION.**—What an infinite boon is the Gospel to mankind! How glorious a transformation it effects, how righteous the obligation it imposes, how great the power it confers! A power to demonstrate in our life the *good*, the *right*, and the *true*.

## Germs of Thought.

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### EMBLEMS OF SOUL WORK.

*Subject: SOUL ARCHITECTURE.*

Building up yourselves."—Jude 20

**T**HE true soul work of man is frequently represented under architectural imagery. Sometimes God is spoken of as the Builder. "Ye are God's building," &c. When He is builder then souls are represented as "lively stones," His "house," His "temple." In other places the building work is represented as man's. Then he is urged, "to build up himself in his most holy faith." The truth is that in all the true work of the soul "we are labourers together with God." He is the primary agent in all the virtuous activities of humanity. He imparts the motive. He gives the rule. He bestows the strength for all holy work. Albeit his agency in no way supersedes the necessity or annuls the obligation of human effort.

All souls are architects. Man is a constructive creature, some are building scientific systems, some mercantile schemes, some social or political institutions ; all are builders. But what are all building? Character. Markets, governments, palaces, cathedrals, are nothing to this. This is the only *real* property man has. All else belongs to another. God claims not only our worldly possessions, but our very being. All souls are his. But He claims not our character ? No. If a man's character is good, He gives him the credit ; if bad, He lays the sole blame on him, and leaves him to suffer the just retribution. Character determines his worth in the universe. In the eye of God and the myriads of His holy ones, man is estimated not according to his worldly wealth, social status, genius or mental attainments, but according to his character. If holy, though a pauper on earth, he is a peer in the spiritual domain. If depraved, though

a prince on earth, he is to all holy intelligences a pauper “poor, miserable, blind, and naked.” Nor is there aught on earth but character that he can carry with him beyond the grave. “Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him. As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.” Friends, property, even our own bodies we leave behind us in death, but our character we bear with us into the vast unknown.

The great work of souls, therefore, is to build up for themselves a good character; and this requires just what a good material superstructure requires—good plan, good materials, good foundation, and good workmanship.

I. **THE PLAN MUST BE GOOD.** An architectural plan of any merit should always be marked by two things, *fitness* and *beauty*. A building that is not fitted for the purpose of its erection, whatever that purpose might be—commemoration, worship, business, recreation, or residence, can scarcely be called good. A good architect should thoroughly understand all the uses for which the superstructure has been required, and adapt his plans accordingly. But *beauty* should be studied as well as *fitness*. Man has an instinct and a craving for beauty, and beautiful objects are amongst the chief sources of his pleasure and chief means of his culture. Hence in all the forms and hues of the universe God has met this human wish and want. In nature He has not only provided food and raiment, but beauty—beauty in all places and in boundless forms. Wherever man in nature turns his eye, above, beneath, around, beauty meets his eye, and charms his soul. An architectural plan that does not embrace all those curves, and lines, and proportions, and blended shades that please man’s aesthetic nature, cannot be considered truly good. He who puts up an ugly building, whether in city or village, however convenient in a low sense, has sinned against the order of nature, and committed an offence against human souls. If “a thing of beauty is a joy for ever,” how can a thing of ugliness be good?

Now what is the plan on which the human character is to be built up? Is there an *ideal*? If so, what and where? Thank God, we have it,—have it not merely pencilled on paper, and described by pen, but in real life. The divine laws of moral architecture are in Jesus of Nazareth drawn out in living characters. “He has left us an example that we should follow His steps.” This is the plan by which souls are to build, and there is none other. This plan has the two great attributes of architectural excellence, fitness, and beauty. Is it not *fitted* to the capacities, the cravings, the needs of our spiritual nature? Would not conformity to the image of Christ be the realization of the soul’s moral ideal, and the completeness and paradise of its being? And is not this plan *beautiful* as well? Moral beauty is the highest beauty. “It is the beauty of the Lord our God.” What has the charm to absorb all the powers of the soul, and fill it with transport of admiration as the beauty of incorruptible honesty, unsullied holiness, disinterested love, and self-sacrificing benevolence? And where have you this but in Christ? Search all human history through and find me one other *ideal* after which you would have all human character formed. All history and all literature declare that such an ideal is no where to be found in them. Men, alas, are everywhere building character after other plans, some by the plan of sensual pleasure, others by the plan of commercial greed, others by the plan of worldly vanity and ambition. But they are all both *unsuitable* and *unlovely*. In them the soul is neither happy nor beautiful.

**II. THE MATERIALS SHOULD BE GOOD.** Let a building be ever so architecturally beautiful and ever so fitted for its purpose, if the materials of which it is constructed are inferior—if the stones are crumbling, the timber rotten, the mortar untempered, and the tiles leaky, it would scarcely be considered a good edifice. Good materials are necessary for a good building. It is so with character. What are the materials with which man builds up his character? **ACTIONS.** By actions I mean not *meré* muscular exertion, but mental effort as well. All the thinkings, wishings, and volitions of the soul, whether expressed by bodily effort or not, are human actions. The deeds that men do *by* the body are few compared with those which they do *in* the body. All

these deeds wrought in or by the body are the materials out of which the moral character is built up. Deeds repeated become habits, and habits become forces that sway and shape the moral man.

Now these deeds are always of two qualities, good or bad, and the quality depends evermore upon the motives that produce them. What are the motives whence all action flows? They all take their rise from one of two sources, either from *a supreme regard to God, or a supreme regard to self*. There is no middle state of heart—no intervening font from which they can spring. All the moral actions of all moral beings throughout the universe can be traced to one of those two fountal sources—selfishness or Godly love. Hence the only materials by which a good character can be formed are the actions that spring from a supreme regard to the great God. The “gold, the silver, and the precious stones,” that will bear the fire of the last day, and sparkle brilliantly in the last conflagration, are found only in this quarry. All selfish deeds, however outwardly beautiful, are only the worthless “wood, hay, and stubble.” Much do I fear that the character of the vast majority of mankind is being built up of these materials—materials gathered from the field and forest of selfishness. Though men so polish the rotten wood, and weave into forms of external beauty the “hay” and the “stubble,” that the fabric appears a grand thing to the common eye, it is a miserable affair withal. The first spark of retribution will kindle it into flame, and wrap the soul in the scorching and unquenchable fires of moral remorse.

**III. The FOUNDATION MUST BE GOOD.** The architectural plan however good, and the materials however excellent, would not constitute a good building if the foundation is not secure. The most beautiful edifice constructed of the choicest materials if built on the sand, beaten by the billows, or on the hill rocked by the volcano, would be of little service. A good foundation is as necessary for a good character. What is the good foundation? Christ. This philosophy, experience and the Bible declare. “Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation,” and again “other foundations can no man lay that is laid,” Jesus Christ. But in what way is Christ the foundation? Sad and fatal mistakes

are made here. He is the foundation of *hope*, but hope of what? *Heaven*, is the general answer. "I earnestly desire a better world; I am weary of the trials, labours, and vexations of this life, I long for a happier sphere.

Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest. My hope of such a happy world is built on Christ, He is my substitute: He has borne the penalty for my sins. He has endured the vengeance of God on my behalf. He has discharged the enormous debt against justice which I had contracted. By His sufferings and His death He hath purchased heaven for me. This is perhaps the popular view of Christ, as a foundation. But I denounce it as unscriptural and pernicious. The only effect of this view is to intensify that selfishness, which is the guilt and damnation of souls. Is it wrong to hope? No. Hope is an instinct of the soul; but the object of hope should be *holiness* not heaven.

The soul whose hope is directed to the realization of that eternal ideal of goodness that shines in the universe, that walks with majesty the chambers of the conscience, and is embodied in the life of Christ, is alone filled with happiness. The preachers who are constantly making selfish appeals to the instinct of hope and fear in the human soul, who seek evermore to charm with heaven and terrify with hell, degrade human nature, misrepresent the Gospel, and foster that selfishness which is the devil of the universe. Moral goodness should always be held up as the object of hope, moral evil as the object of fear.

We have seen that all the deeds that enter into the constitution of a true character must spring from supreme regard for Him. And how is that to be awakened and sustained in the minds of men selfish and depraved! Only through Christ. He alone gives us that revelation of the infinite love, and glorious perfections of God as can destroy our selfishness, and inflame our hearts with love to Him. This is the true idea of Christ as the foundation. I can build up no true character without Him. Unless I am actuated in all by supreme love to God, I am nothing. And this I can never attain only as I ponder that revelation of Him which Christ in His Gospel makes to my soul. Truly then "other foundations can no man lay" for *moral* excellence. Foundation for selfish hopes have often been laid,

and men are everywhere building on them. The world abounds with such buildings, some grand and imposing, but they are like houses on the sand, and are constantly tumbling down. The ever-swelling river of history bears on its bosom the wrecks of many such.

IV. The **WORKMANSHIP** must be good. This is important. What if a building has a good plan, good materials, and a good foundation, if the workmanship is unskilful and poor, and the materials badly put together. If the walls are not perpendicular, gravitation will pull them down. If the timbers of the roof are ill-jointed, the tempest will bear it away. There must be good workmanship in character. It is true that where love to God is the inspiration, the character will be good in the main. But there is a *wisdom* of conduct required in order to turn our lives to the best account. Our good works must be works wisely done; we must be "workmen that need not be ashamed." There is a practical wisdom necessary to control our impulses, shape our lives, and direct our powers. We must select the department of holy labour for which we are most competent, and employ the season that is most opportune. Even Christ himself was *skilful* in labour. And Paul, though filled with enthusiasm, was a skilful workman. But wisdom directed his steps and dictated his efforts. Was there not great wisdom in the scenes which he selected, and in the arguments and appeals he employed to different classes of men. Whatever we do, we should do well; if we reason, reason well; if we speak, speak well; if we write, write well.

CONCLUSION.—A good character is everything to thee, brother. It is the house in which thou dost *really* live, the temple in which thou dost worship if thou worshippest at all. It is, indeed, the very organ of thy soul. Through it thou seest all outward things, and hearest all outward voices. According to it God and the universe are to thee. Is it not of the utmost importance, then, that thou shouldst work in building up a good one? One with a good plan, good materials, good foundation, and good workmanship. The time hastens on when this character-building shall be tried,—tried from base to roof. In allusion to this testing time of character, the

Eternal says, "Judgment also will I lay to the line; and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." The idea is, as the builder tries his work by the plummet line, God will one day try character by the righteous principles of his law, and whatever building will not stand the test, shall be utterly destroyed. "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." And Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, says, "The day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." There is a day for testing character—a day of fire—the fire of absolute justice—the fire that shall burn to the very centre of souls, consuming all that is worthless. Even the good man who has aught of false in his character, though he be saved as by fire, will suffer loss, the loss of labour, the loss of opportunity, the loss of possession. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Ah, where? Who but the Omniscient can answer that question?

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*Subject: THE WORD OF GOD IN RELATION TO OUR NATURAL DISPOSITIONS.*

"And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed," &c.—Luke viii. 4—15.

*N* this well-known parable of the sower the Lord designs to show how it fares with the kingdom of God in this world. The first thing to be observed is that the kingdom of God can only make its appearance where the Word of God is proclaimed.

No field can be made fruitful without seed. The Word is always the same ; but the reception with which it meets is different, depending on the natural dispositions of different men. That this is actually so we know from experience. This fact, moreover, seems to point to consequences in the highest degree significant. It would appear, for example, as though certain men could not do otherwise than reject ; and in that case two results would follow of necessity ; first, that they could not be held responsible for this ; and secondly, that they would be excluded from the kingdom of God once for all. But if we look more closely we shall see that the very contrary of this is the truth : *that the natural disposition of our hearts does not remove our responsibility, nor, on the other hand, does it make it impossible for us to enter the kingdom.*

I. First of all the text shows us the different dispositions of different men.

The Lord compares some to the hard-trodden way. We need not think of men specially wicked. They may be men possessed of a certain amount of kindness and good-nature. But they are not susceptible of what is divine and does not appeal to the senses. There is about them a certain spiritual dulness hindering them from taking an interest in that which does not belong to this earthly life. It is intelligible enough that the Word of God should make no impression on such men.

The Lord refers next to people of excitable natures. They are susceptible of all the influences that surround them. They are more susceptible, too, of influences that are noble and good than of those that are common or bad. These are ever passing from ecstasy to ecstasy. But while they are always being impressed, no impression is deep or lasting. A cause will awaken their warmest sympathies to-day, to-morrow some other will take its place, and the day following it will be forgotten.

Where people of the third-class fail is in decision. They do not resolutely distinguish things that differ. They mingle things up together which will not coalesce ; would unite things that exclude one another. This they do, not so much from any resolve to be on friendly terms with all men, as from a habit of consulting convenience. They would not see their rest

broken in upon, and, without troubling themselves much about it, call evil good, and say, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.

Finally, the Lord mentions the good ground. Observe, that this, too, is fruit-bearing only when it has received the seed. So that here, too, the reference is to the *natural* disposition. The Lord refers to those people who have naturally a disposition—an open heart to receive the truth; who see clearly what comes to them from without; who are sufficiently at rest to analyse the different impressions they receive, and sufficiently conscientious to cherish and hold fast those which they know to be good.

We need to inquire, therefore, *Whence these natural dispositions?* If we put the question to ourselves, the answer will be that we were born with them, for we have had them ever since we can remember. How often do we see the natural disposition of the parent reproduced in the child! Every man is born with a certain natural disposition. But this is not all. We must not forget the influence of *education*. This begins earlier than for the most part we think. Its influence, too, is very potent and wide. Indeed, we might almost venture to say that nothing is born in us, but that all is acquired. At least, it is impossible accurately to distinguish between what is inherent and what comes by education.

II. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY, ACCORDINGLY, IF IT DOES NOT CEASE ALTOGETHER, SEEMS TO BE REDUCED TO THE NARROWEST LIMITS. The roadway cannot do other than the nature of the case allows. It would be very unrighteous to require that the roadway should bring forth fruit like the good ground. In the nature of things it cannot do so.

*Yet our natural disposition does not remove our responsibility.* Our Lord points to this fact very significantly when he refers to the inaptness of the mass of men to understand the mystery of the kingdom of God as something culpable in them. It is easy to explain how this is. If men were not responsible for that to which they are led by natural disposition, how about the penalties of human law and the ordinances of magistrates? One man has an inborn propensity to steal; would he be

acquitted on the plea, "I am so constituted that I cannot do otherwise than I have done. It is a misfortune that I am as I am, but I am quite unable to alter it. The negro cannot change his skin." In reality, to urge such a plea would be to compare oneself with the beasts, and to hazard the right to be dealt with as a man.

*And no one can be really in earnest in urging such a plea. The voice of conscience testifies aloud against it.* If you follow your inclination to sin, be it inborn or acquired, your conscience will say to you, guilty. No one commits a sin to which he has no natural inclination. It is our natural disposition that leads us to sin, and when we have sinned, the feeling of guilt oppresses our soul. Many a man who, owing to an unfortunate natural disposition, has become the servant of sin, bitterly curses his vices, not simply because certain outward evil results have overtaken him, but because the consciousness of guilt is a burden to him. Conscience declares to us that we are responsible for that to which we are led by natural impulses, and if conscience testifies with so loud a voice now that we are in the midst of life where a thousand voices strive to drown this one, how will it be one day when all these voices shall be silenced, when we shall stand at the gate of eternity, when we shall stand before God, the holy and all-seeing God ? Beyond doubt, they who are lost are lost through their guilt.

III. But if our natural disposition does not remove our responsibility, then the other point is implied, viz., **THAT NATURAL DISPOSITION WILL IN NO CASE MAKE ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD AN IMPOSSIBILITY.**

*It would not be unjust if it were said to us "That you are like the hard-trodden way is your own fault and for this you shall be punished, and no possibility of becoming other than you are shall be open to you."* It would be just if all our doings drew after them all those consequences which they might reasonably be expected to draw after them. But then that would fill us with despair. It would be our ruin if there were no possibility of our becoming free from the condition of guilt. But we know from experience that there is no such unalterable destiny. What would become of us if we had always to

reap according as we have sown ? The evil consequences which might have followed our sins in thousands of instances do not come. It has been better with us through our whole life than we have deserved. Many evils which we have deserved to endure have been warded off. Much food that we have not deserved has fallen to our lot. So that we have no difficulty in seeing that something better is possible to us.

*How is it attained?* The Lord is husbandman as well as sower. *He will make corn-land of that which is not corn-land as yet.* The Lord works on each in a suitable way ; chiefly in the time of sorrow. It is then that He speaks to us so often, and in words which none hear but which enter our hearts deeply. Hence we should use rightly the time of sorrow. What is wanted, accordingly, is a willingness on our part to be met. Beyond doubt, it is harder for some to become like the good ground than for others. Inborn or acquired dispositions make it harder for some than others have the least idea of. But it is impossible to none.

Moreover, all are not required to become exactly alike. It is not all the ground that bears a hundredfold; some parts bear only sixty, or thirtyfold. But no one needs to remain entirely unfruitful ; and where there is any good fruit, be it much or little, entrance into the kingdom of Heaven is in that case certain.

The first thing, then, is that we become clear to which class we belong. And the second, that we become really earnest in our striving after holiness. How much the Lord has done for us ! He died on the cross for us. How much He is still doing for us every day ! We, too, have something to do for Him that we may be to the praise of his glorious grace.

By R. VAUGHAN PRYCE, M.A., LL.B.

*Subject: CHRISTIAN TRUSTEESHIP.*

"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebutable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."—1 Tim. vi. 13—16.

**A**S these verses immediately follow those discussed in a "Finger Post" in this number, reference to the context is not necessary. The text is a solemn charge addressed to Timothy as one invested with a trust of unspeakable importance. What is the trust? It is here called a commandment. "That thou keep this commandment." Paul undoubtedly refers to the Gospel. It has all the attributes of a *law*. It is authoritative, it is published, it is universally binding. It is called "the law of righteousness," the "law of liberty," the "law of love," "the law of life." This Gospel had been entrusted to Timothy, and Paul solemnly charges him here to take proper care of it. *In the discharge of the trust we have to consider the mode and the motive.*

**I. THE MODE.** First: *Faultlessly*. He was to "keep this commandment without spot, unrebutable." This may mean one of two things. Either that he was not to tamper with the Gospel, not to treat it in such a way as to make it appear in the eyes of men a spotted and rebukable thing; or that he was so to keep it that his own moral character might be spotless and irreproachable. Or the two things may be included. (1.) The Gospel can be made a reproachable thing. Some men have attached to it such notions and such rites as to make it appear odious to the common intellect and conscience of mankind. (2.) Men can make *themselves* reproachable by their treatment of the Gospel. Some of the most hideous characters in the history of our world have been bigoted theologians and intolerant ecclesiastics. Secondly: *Perseveringly*. "Until the appearing of our Lord

Jesus Christ." When would Christ appear to him? Certainly at death: perhaps before. It is clear that Paul regarded the final advent of Christ as just at hand—an event that might occur even before the death of himself and his contemporaries. On this point he was not inspired. Christ Himself declared that they had no revelation of the times. (Acts i. 7.) Indeed, Paul here as good as says that he did not know that "which in his times he shall show." God has seasons for doing things, and there is a season for the final advent of Christ. Up to His advent, whenever it came, Timothy was to act as a faithful steward. In the discharge of this trust we have to consider.

II. The motive. The motive here is drawn from the presence of God. First: *As the original quickener of all life.* "Who quickeneth all things." He endueth all things with life. All life is from Him—vegetable, animal, rational, moral. "In Him all things live." He is here represented, Secondly: *As the incarnate exemplifier of faithfulness.* "I charge thee in the sight of God who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus." He reminds Timothy that Christ himself was there. His eye was on him. And his example before him. "Before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." He brings Timothy into the presence of one of the grandest facts of Christ's earthly life. (John xviii. 36, 37.) What a motive this to the discharge of our stewardship that the eye and example of Christ are before us! "I give thee charge in the sight of God," &c. What wonderful things are said of the Great God here! He is here represented, Thirdly: *As the supreme Disposer of all futurity.* "Which in his times He shall show." All times and seasons are in His hand. "I am the Lord, I change not, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which are not yet done." The infinite future lies open to His eye, and He has arranged all its events, and they break on the horizon of His creatures in His own time. Fourthly: *As the blessed King of all kings.* "The blessed and only Potentate the King of kings and Lord of lords." Not only "by him do human kings reign and human princes decree justice," but by Him the highest authorities in the universe are governed. What an empire is His, and He is *happy* in the

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exercise of his vast authority. "The blessed." Human kings are seldom happy. They have often moral misgivings as to their right to rule, and suspicions as to their power to meet all the emergencies that may arise in their kingdom. Happiness is on the throne of the universe. Fifthly: *As the exclusive Possessor of immortality.* "Who only hath immortality." No creature in the universe can be essentially immortal. Essential immortality belongs to God and God only. The immortality of others depends upon His will. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed," &c. Sixthly: *As the Resident of ineffable splendour.* "Dwelling in the light," &c. The light He dwells in is so resplendent that it is unapproachable. "Which no man can approach unto," &c. Thou "coverest Thyself with light as with a garment." Nay, Thou art light itself. "God is light: the Father of lights." There are beings that dwell in unutterable darkness; there are beings that dwell in borrowed light; some partial and some perfect; none but God dwells in His own light. He is the Great Central Light of all the lights in the universe—material, intellectual, spiritual.

"Fountain of light, thyself invisible  
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st  
 Thron'd inaccessible, but when thou shad'st  
 The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud  
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,  
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,  
 Yet dazzle heaven, that brightest seraphim  
 Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes."

MILTON.

Seventhly: *As the supremely Adored of all holy souls.* "To whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." Some suppose this to be the fragment of an ancient Church hymn. It is the language, however, of all holy souls in the world. "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting. To thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein," &c.

# The Pith of Renowned Sermons.

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JOHN HOWE.

*Subject: THE VANITY OF MAN AS A MORTAL.*

“Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?—Psa. lxxxix. 47, 48.

**A**E have in the words before us this ground of discourse! *That the short time of man on earth, limited by a certain, unavoidable death, if we consider it abstractly, by itself, without respect to a future state, carries that appearance and aspect with it, as if God had made all men in vain.* That is said to be vain, according to the import of the word here used, which is either false, a fiction, a shadow; or which is useless, unprofitable; or which is purposeless, at least, having no valuable purpose. The life of man, supposing there is no future state, is—

I. SHADY. There is an appearance of somewhat; but search a little, and it is found a lie, a piece of falsehood, as if he did but feign have being, and were not. What hovering shadows, what uncertain entities are men! In a moment they are, and are not. I know not when to say I have seen a man. It seems to me as if there were some such things before my eyes; but instantly my own sense is ready to give my own sense the lie. They are on a sudden dwindled away, and force me almost to acknowledge a delusion. This is so because of, first, the *minuteness*, the small proportion and degree of being, which this mortal part of man hath in it. It is truly said of all created things, “*their non esse* is more than *their esse*”—they have more no-being than being. How much more may this be said of the material and mortal part of the outside of man. There is this shadowiness because of, secondly, the *instability* and fluidness of the mortal part of man. While he is, he hastens away, and

within a little is not. The true maxim of an ancient says, all things flow, nothing stays, after the manner of a river. The life of man, supposing there is no future state, is—

II. USELESS. We shall see that if man were only mortal, he is made in vain, if we take some view of his nature. And in this First : Of his *intellective* powers. Hereby he frames notions even of such things as are above the sphere of sense. Secondly : His power of *determining himself*, of choosing and refusing. Thirdly : *His capacity for an immortal state*. What need is there for such a nature as this, for the mere mortal man ? The life of man, supposing there is no future state, is—

III. PURPOSELESS. Here we must consider the ends for which upon that supposition, we must suppose him made. Here we have a double agent to be accommodated with a suitable end—man now made, and God who made him.

First: *The end of man himself*. Man is a creature, capable of propounding to himself an end, and of acting with a design towards it. And we can think of no ends which men either do or ought to propound to themselves but by one of three principles. (α) *Sense*. Who can think the satisfying of sense the commensurate end of man ? What ! That he should come into the world with such powers and endowments for this ! It were a like case as if one should be clad in scarlet to go to plough, or curiously instructed in arts and sciences to tend hogs. (β) *Reason*. Suppose that under its influence he seeks the acquisition of much knowledge, the furnishing his mind with a store of choice notions that he may please himself in being, or in having men think him, a learned wight. Death robs away all his gain. “It is said by those that survive, “There lies learned dust.” If the world be not looked upon as an attiring room to dress one’s self in for an appearance on the eternal stage, but only as a great charnel house, where they undress and put off themselves to sleep in everlasting darkness, how can we think it worth a thought, or to be the subject of any rational design or care ? How little doth it signify, and how flat and low a thing it would seem, if this hour I should think a few admiring thoughts of God, while I feel myself liable to lose my very thinking

power, and whole being the next. From God we *design satisfaction and blessedness to ourselves*. To think that every time one enters that blessed presence, "for aught I know, I shall approach it no more; this is possibly my last sight of that pleasant face, my last taste of those everlasting pleasures." What bitterness must this infuse. Moreover, if man had been only mortal—

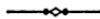
Secondly : *The end or purpose of God as his Maker must be considered.* Could creating men as mere mortals, and as we see them in their mere material life, in any way agree to God, according to our clearest and most assured conceptions of Him, not only from our reasoning, but from His discovery of Himself ? He acts vainly who acts beneath himself. A humor to trifle, or a mischievous disposition, would never fail to be thought inglorious and infamous, as may be seen in the instances of Sardanapalus's spinning and Domitian's killing of flies. We are to consider what may be congruous for Him to do who is infinitely wise and good as well as powerful. (1.) How may it square with the divine *wisdom* to give being to a world of reasonable creatures, and giving them only a short time of abode in being to abandon them to a perpetual annihilation ? Divine wisdom must design to preserve authority over His creatures, by recommending Himself to their fear and love. How little would it agree with this design to have made man only for this temporary state ? How little would it tend to get the *fear of God*, or *love* towards God. (2.) How may such creation of men as mere mortals agree with the *goodness of God* ? He would then have withheld (α) a *degree* (β) and a *continuance* of enjoyment from us which would be very unlike the dispensation of the blessed God. Upon the whole, therefore, it seems repugnant to the great attributes of the Allwise Being to have made man only for this state ; that to think so were to conceive that God had acted much beneath Himself, and done a vain thing in making such a creature, no end being attainable by it which we can suppose either His wisdom or goodness to aim at.

**CONCLUSION.—***That certainly there must be another state after this, and accordingly steer our course.* This conclusion must

influence, First: *Our judgments.* (1) *About human life.* (2) *About the character of God.* The conclusion must influence. Secondly: *Our practice.* (1) *It rebukes.* Can we in sober reason think we were made only for such ends as the most only pursue? Would not men be ashamed to have it written in their foreheads these are the only ends they are capable of? (2) *It directs.* Live as becomes the expectation of a future state; and do this (α) *By endeavour for a calm indifference towards the objects and affairs that belong to this present life.* It is equally a prevarication from true manhood to be moved with everything and nothing; the former would speak a man's spirit a feather, the latter a stone. (β) *Be not over much taken up in minding the body.* (γ) *Set ourselves with the whole intention of our souls to care for the future state.* (δ) *Make it our principal business to adorn and cultivate our inward man.* "We are dressing ourselves for eternity," we ought to be able to say. (ε) *Have much conversation with God.* (ζ) *Commit ourselves to the Redeemer.* (η) *Live in cheerful expectation of eternity.*

Bristol.

U. R. THOMAS.



## Variations on Themes from Scripture.

*Subject: MANY YEARS TO ENJOY LIFE: THIS NIGHT TO DIE.*

THE rich man was getting richer to his heart's content. So plentiful was the produce of his land, that he must needs enlarge his premises. There was not room enough in his barns for those golden harvests; the barns must be pulled down, and greater ones built, wherein to bestow all his fruits and his goods. Happy man he accounted himself that day; happy in a prosperous present, happier still in a promising future. A future of happiness not less prolonged than assured. So he would say to his soul that day, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be

merry." That day he said it. Fool! that night his soul was required of him.

Woe was denounced by one of old on another of the Dives family, who said, "I will build me a wide house, and large chambers," and who cut him out windows, and ceiled his house with cedar, and painted it with vermillion. "Shalt thou reign because thou closest thyself in cedar?" Man's sanguine and sure "I will"—how little of the future tense there sometimes is about *it* after all.

Tu secunda marmora  
Locas sub ipsum funus ; et sepulchri  
Immemor, struis domos."

In Homer we see from his tall ship the king of men descend there fondly thinking the gods conclude his toil, where, in fact, awaits him murder most foul and most unnatural. In Homeric figure—

"So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall,  
The sovereign of the herd was doomed to fall.

Bitterly the shade of Atrides repeats his tragic story to Odysseus, telling how, "Alas! he hoped, the toils of war o'ercome, to meet soft quiet and repose at home. Delusive hope!" for at home the hand was already upraised to smite him.

The Turkish prince, Alp Arslan, dying of Joseph's dagger stroke, bequeathed an admonition to the pride of kings, which Gibbon has preserved. "Yesterday, as from an eminence I beheld the numbers, the discipline, and the spirit of my armies; the earth seemed to tremble under my feet; and I said in my heart, 'Surely thou art the king of the world, the greatest and most invincible of warriors.' These armies are no longer mine; and in the confidence of my personal strength, I now fall by the hand of an assassin." The inscription on his tomb invited those who had seen the glory of Alp Arslan exalted to the heavens, to meditate on its present burial in the dust.

Michelet moralises with trenchant irony on the fate which overtook our Henry V. on French soil. It is to the "Dance of Death" he refers in the exclamation, "What sport for death, what a malicious pastime to have brought the victorious Harry within a month's reach of the crown of France!"

After a life of unremitting toil for that end, he wanted but one little month added to his existence to be the survivor of Charles VI. . . . No! not a month, not a day more was to be his."

Splendid was that festival at Cæsarea at which Herod Agrippa, in the pomp and pride of power, entered the theatre in a robe of silver, which glittered, says the historian, with the morning rays of the sun, so as to dazzle the eyes of the assembly, and excite general admiration. Some of his flatterers set up the shout, "A present god!" Agrippa did not repress the impious adulation which spread through the theatre. At that moment he looked up, and saw an owl perched over his head on a rope, and Agrippa had been forewarned that when next he saw that bird, "at the height of his fortune," he would die within five days. The fatal omen, according to Josephus, pierced the heart of the king, who, with deep melancholy, exclaimed, "Your god will soon suffer the common lot of mortality." He was immediately struck, in the language of the sacred volume, by an angel. Seized with violent pains, he was carried to his palace, lingered five days in extreme agony, being "eaten of worms," and so died.

Fielding forcibly presents a certain sanguine projector, lusty and strong, in the heyday of middle age, who reckons confidently on becoming heir to the estate of a senior of immense wealth, and has all his plans elaborately prepared for his disposal of the same. Nothing is wanting to enable him to enter upon the immediate execution of these plans, but the death of the elder man, in calculating which he has studied every book extant that treats of the value of lives, reversions, &c.; from all which he has satisfied himself, that as he has every day a chance of this happening, so has he more an even chance of its happening before long. "But while the captain was one day busied in deep contemplations of this kind, one of the most unlucky, as well as most unseasonable, accidents happened to him. The utmost malice of fortune could, indeed, have contrived nothing so cruel, so mal-a-propos, so absolutely destructive to all his schemes." It was, that just at the very instant when his heart was exulting in meditations on the happiness which would accrue to him by the other's death, he

himself was cut off by an apoplexy. As Leontine complains in “Heraclius,”

“Et lorsque le hasard me flatte avec excès,  
Tout mon dessein avorte au milieu du succès.”

It was just when Kleber was beginning to reap the fruits of his intrepidity and discretion, that he was cut off by the obscure assassin, Souliman. One is reminded of Thomson on the massacre of the bees,

“at evening snatched,  
Beneath the cloud of guilt-concealing night,  
And fixed o'er sulphur ; while, not dreaming ill,  
The happy people, in their waxen cells,  
Sat tending public cares, and planning schemes  
Of temperance, for winter poor,” &c.

A Tory historian, recording the close of the Parliamentary Session in July 1827, takes occasion to observe that Mr. Canning now saw every wish of his heart gratified, having raised himself to the highest position in the State, and being looked up to in every part of the world as the protector of the oppressed, and the advocate of freedom. In the prime of life, “his sway in Parliament was unbounded, and he might hope for a long career of fame, fortune, and usefulness.” *Vanitas vanitatum!* The hand of fate was already upon him, and he was to be suddenly snatched from the scene of his glory, at the very moment when he seemed to have attained the summit of earthly felicity. Even, however, when death is not concerned, as in his memorable case, in the sudden and final collapse of a great career, and the abrupt extinction of exuberant promise, how often is Cowper’s picture realized where

“runs the mountainous and craggy ridge  
That tempts ambition. On the summit, see,  
The seals of office glitter in his eyes ;  
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels,  
Close, at his heels, a demagogue ascends,  
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,  
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.”

The picture is, in some sort, and for moral uses, a pendant to that by another poet, of those who are pushing hard up hill the

cumbrous load of life ; just as they trust to gain the farthest steep, and put an end to strife,

“ Down thunders back the stone with mighty sweep,  
And hurls their labours to the valley deep,  
For ever vain.”

But this is diverging farther and farther from the direct import of our theme. More to the purpose is the same poet’s description of Celadon assuring his betrothed of perfect safety, and triumphantly asserting her absolute immunity from the perils of the storm, and as exultantly inferring his own, from his relationship to her ; when,

“ from his void embrace,  
Mysterious Heaven ! that moment, to the ground,  
A blackened corse, was struck the beauteous maid.”

Some innocents, as Cleopatra has it, escape not the thunder-bolt. Innocence, as well as iniquity, may know something of that breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

The loving friends of Charlotte Brontë, after her marriage, are described by one among them as catching occasional glimpses of brightness, and pleasant peaceful murmurs of sound, telling, to them who stood outside, of the gladness within ; and they said among themselves, “ After a long and a hard struggle—after many cares and bitter sorrows—she is tasting happiness now.” Remembering her trials, they were glad in the idea that God had seen fit to wipe away the tears from her eyes. “ But God’s ways are not as our ways, Mrs. Gaskell adds. Just as Currer Bell’s happiness seemed beginning, and her goodness ripening, came fever, delirium, death. Mrs. Gaskell’s own career was similarly cut short, just when she was finishing, but ere yet she had finished, the completest and ablest of her works ; just when public recognition of her merits was growing earnest as well as general. It is the old, old story. For what, as the old ballad says,

“ is this worldys bliss,  
That changeth as the moon !  
My summer’s day in lusty May  
Is darked before the noon.”

FRANCIS JACOX, B.A.

# The Preacher's Dissecting Room.

“I SPEAK AS TO WISE MEN.”

HENRY PARR LIDDON, M.A.

If “the way to do a thing is just to do it,” as is commonly said, the way to learn how to do it is to see it done by another. It is this latter principle which we desire, in the present series of articles, to turn to profit. We propose to analyse and examine, in each article, some one sermon or portion of a sermon, of some living preacher of ability and reputation; and to endeavour to ascertain in this manner both what other preachers ought to do, and also, what they ought to avoid. In carrying out this idea, and giving such a succession of brief clinical lectures on Homiletical Anatomy, we hope to be equally generous and unsparing in commending what is praiseworthy, and blaming what is blameworthy, according to our view of the case. Of the correctness and value of our criticisms, our readers will judge for themselves.

The “subject” we select to begin with is a sermon preached on a pre-eminently important topic, and on a kind of national occasion.\* For these reasons, as well as for its own intrinsic merits, it well deserves the first place. Let us endeavour to investigate its organization and structure.

The sermon opens with a graphic and arresting description of the Resurrection of Christ as it appeared to his disciples at the time, which is followed by a similar description of its place in the thoughts of St. Paul some thirty years afterwards, leading him to speak as in the words of the text. The circumstances of the text thus clearly set before us, its discussion is next approached by a consideration of what we ordinarily mean by the “power” of a fact, viz., its influences and effects, a point illustrated with great judgment and force by the fact of the then present immense assemblage, and the enormous power it involved. From this the transition is easy to the great question to be con-

\* “The Power of Christ’s Resurrection.” A Sermon preached in St. Paul’s Cathedral, on Easter Day, 1869. By H. P. Liddon, M.A., Student of Christ Church, &c., &c.

sidered, viz., Wherein consists the true power of the Resurrection of Christ ?

This Exordium we hold to be good, as being (1), natural and simple in the order of its thoughts ; (2), only brief, a great point in introductions—it occupies little more than one page ; (3), free from all forestalling of what has afterwards to be said, and yet (4), quite sufficient for its purpose. Like a flight of broad and easy steps, not too many in number, it brings us up without fatigue to where we can command a full view of the special and sacred thought which is enshrined in the text. And this is, evidently, the very thing—if not, indeed, the only thing—for which an Introduction is required. All that we ask of a porter is to attend to the door.

Whether the tone of the Introduction is quite as good as its structure, may perhaps admit of a doubt ; there is something, it may be, a little sensational and abrupt in throwing down a text of Scripture at the beginning of the two first paragraphs, and then picking it up again with an air. At the same time it must be remembered, that the occasion itself, if not exactly sensational, was very peculiar and special, and such as almost to call for something different from that calm and lucid earnestness with which a sermon should open as a rule. A preacher must begin with his hearers at the level on which he finds them.

In the sermon itself, the first topic discussed is the evidential power of Christ's Resurrection ;—“it is the fundamental fact which satisfies the Christian of the absolute truth of the Religion of Christ.” This “evidential power” is illustrated, partly by the peculiar prominence given to the Resurrection in all Apostolic teaching, partly by the public and open nature of the testimony of the Apostles, as of men without any manner of misgiving on the subject, partly by the manifold and converging evidence of it on which they relied, and partly by the failure of all endeavours to explain it away. Having thus established the firmness of the fact itself (without which, of course, it could communicate no firmness to anything else), its bearing on the truth of Christianity is next briefly and most ably considered ; the principal thought being, that the Resurrection was not only the fulfilment of ancient Jewish prophecy, but the fulfilment also of the most distinct, express, extraordinary, and decisive of all the predictions of Christ Himself. From this the inference is well worked out, that, unless there is something intrinsically wiser and better in doubt than in faith (which no one can affirm), you must either “deny the Resurrection, or accept the creed.” “To admit the Resurrection, and then to be perpetually fretting with the real

results of your admission ; by explaining away Christ's lesser miracles, or by grudging their authority to His Apostles, or by questioning the power of prayer and the reality of Providence, or by depreciating the Sacraments\* which Christ has instituted to sustain the higher life of men, or by denying the truth of those Old Testament Scriptures to which He has set the seal of His Personal witness ;—this is to be guilty of mental inconsistency, as well as of irreligious hardihood ; it is to have granted the greater and then to raise a difficulty about granting the less. The only question for a believing Christian is, what is, and what is not warranted, immediately or through necessary inference, by His authority, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. When that question is settled, controversy ought to be at an end ; it ought to have been ended by the evidential power of Christ's resurrection."

Excellent and triumphant, however, as all this is in its way—and made the more so by the sustained and chastened energy and fire of its diction—we must be permitted to express a modest doubt whether it is not excellence out of place. In opening the second division of his subject—"The power of the Resurrection in the moral and spiritual life of the Christian"—the writer proceeds to say, "This was the main scope of the Apostle's prayer. He had no doubt about the truth of the Gospel." But, surely, if this is true, something more is true too. If the Apostle "had no doubt about the truth of the Gospel," the "moral and spiritual life of the Christ" was not only the main scope, but the entire scope of his prayer ; or, at any rate, the "evidential power" of the Resurrection was no part of his prayer. The man who is free from all doubt does not ask for more evidence but more experience. Such a man, having arrived at the summit, does not ask for assistance in climbing, but for a telescope to examine the prospect. But this, according to all reasonable inference, and according to the express admission of the preacher himself, was St. Paul's position at this time. He was at the summit, not on the ascent ; he was longing for wider knowledge and riper experience, not for deeper conviction and more proof. All this first part of the sermon, therefore, which treats of "evidential" power, and which occupies some eleven out of twenty printed pages, must be pronounced a mistake. It is most important, no doubt, in itself ; it is admirably suited to the place, the audience, the season, and the age ; it is a "splendid error," if you will, like

\* The means of grace.

the celebrated charge at Balaklava ; *mais ce n'est pas la guerre.* Examined calmly and critically, and considered as an illustration of the art of preaching, it cannot be pointed to as an example. So large a portion of any sermon ought not to be foreign to its text.

Is such an error of real importance ? Would many persons note it who heard the sermon delivered ? Probably not. But we may be well assured, all the same, that it would tell on its power. When a piece of music is played incorrectly, almost all the hearers will be conscious of something wrong, though only those acquainted with the instrument employed may know exactly what it is. We believe it to be the same in such a case as the present. The ideal of a sermon is an exposition, not a speech, a setting forth of certain thoughts which grow out of a text. The more loyally a preacher keeps to this ideal, the more of a preacher (and of a true orator, too) he will be, and the more of a preacher's work will he do ; but if once he allows himself to be tempted away from it, just so far will he find that he misses both his office and his mark. Only one or two sermon-makers perhaps, will see his mistake ; but multitudes of sermon-hearers may feel its effects.\*

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## Biblical Criticism.

“*Καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσομεν, ἵνανπερ ἐπιτρέπῃ ὁ Θεός.*”—Heb. vi. 3.

**G**REAT diversity of opinion has prevailed respecting this verse. The first point that claims consideration is the reference of *τοῦτο*. Does it point to the immediately preceding clause, *μὴ πάλιν θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι*, or does it look further back still, viz., to *ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φεράμεθα?* Schlichting, Grotius, Limborch, Wetstein, Michaelis, Storr, Abreschius, and

\* If the first part of this sermon had been worked out as a separate and fuller discourse on 1 Cor. xv. 14, treated as a negative way of describing (1) the certainty of Christ's Resurrection, and (2) the immensity of its issues, would not its beauty and strength have been greatly increased ? For such a sermon, we think, would have grown naturally out of the soil of the text, instead of being a kind of transplanted tree, as at present, injuring others and itself.

the bulk of those who view this whole passage as a statement of the apostle's intended course of argument, allege that the natural reference of *τοῦτο* is to what immediately precedes ; and therefore they conceive the apostle's meaning to be, that though at present he cannot discuss the simple principles enumerated, yet he will do so at some other time, if opportunity be afforded. Now, the objections to this interpretation are manifold. To express the idea indicated, the proper form would have been, not *καὶ τοῦτο ποιῆσομεν*, but *ποιῆσομεν δέ καὶ τοῦτο*. Again, it is obvious that the statement of a purpose to handle elementary principles at some other time would furnish no suitable starting-point for the solemn warnings which immediately follow. In fact, the connection would be destroyed ; for can we suppose the apostle to say, “ I will discuss the first principles at some future time ; for if you apostatize after being enlightened, &c., it is impossible that you can be restored ? ” Besides, when the peculiar expression is considered which the apostle has used in reference to the first principles, “ not laying again the foundation,” there appears something like a contradiction in supposing him immediately to add, that he will again lay the foundation. The substance of the participial clause is a negation, *μὴ καταβαλλόμενοι* ; and it is altogether unwarrantable to omit the negative particle, and thus to make the very opposite of the idea expressed in the preceding clause the thing to which *τοῦτο* refers. But if the negative statement be what *τοῦτο* points to, then the sense brought out is really nothing different from what emerges when *φερώμεθα* itself is made the object of reference, Tholuck feels the force of this objection, and therefore decides against the reference to *καταβαλλόμενοι* ; but still he supposes that there is something awkward in the language of the apostle when *τοῦτο* is made to point back to *φερώμεθα*. This, however, is a mere fancy. In fact, this reference of *τοῦτο*, independently of all other difficulties, is by far the most natural. For observe that the two clauses, to one or other of which *τοῦτο* must refer, are not independent statements, of which it would be unreasonable to pass over the latter for the sake of reaching the former ; but they are members of one compound sentence, of which *φερώμεθα* is the affirming word, and *καταβαλλόμενοι* is a subordinate and explanatory clause. *Τοῦτο*, therefore, is most reasonably made to refer to what is affirmed in the preceding sentence, taken as a whole. Let us go on to perfection, not pausing by the way ; and this we will do—what ? Most unquestionably go on to perfection. To suppose aught else, either makes the apostle contradict himself, or brings out the same

idea as the other reference, but in a forced and unnatural manner: Not laying the foundation; and this we will do, viz., not lay the foundation, or we will abstain from laying the foundation.

Most of those who view this whole sentence as a statement of the apostle's design, contend for the reference of *τοῦτο* to *καταβαλλόμενοι*, though many of them acknowledge that it is better to connect it with *φερώμεθα*. But, on the other hand, all who look upon the passage as admonitory, concur in holding by this last reference: This we will do, viz.: go on to perfection. The words would express a confident hope on the part of the apostle, that his readers would be stimulated to join with him in running the Christian race with augmented celerity. It may be said, indeed, that if anything in the shape of admonition or incitement had been designed, we should rather have expected the subjunctive *ποιήσομεν*, like *φερώμεθα* in the preceding sentence. And the fact is, that there are weighty and numerous authorities for this reading, such as the Uncial codices A. C. D. E., also many cursive MSS., and some of the best versions. It is the reading followed by Theodoret and Cœcumenius, and it is preferred by Böhme, Klee, Bleek, Lunemann, Delitzsch, and others. It is a strong argument in defence of the subjunctive that it is coupled with *φερώμεθα* and it is a stronger argument still, that an admonition such as is then exhibited furnishes a far better starting-point for the solemn warning which follows in the 4th verse, "For it is impossible," &c. The subjunctive would throw the idea into the form of a formal advice, Let us; the indicative future exhibits it in the shape of a confident hope or expressed purpose, We will. The words, *εάνπερ ἐπιτρέπῃ ὁ Θεός*, have always been viewed as peculiarly favourable to the idea that it is the apostle's own purpose which he has been expressing, and no doubt they would be very consistent with this view; but still they are not at all unsuitable to the other interpretation, expressing, as they do, in connection with it, the truth that human purposes and hopes should always be formed in subordination to the arrangements of Heaven. If opportunity be given, if life be spared, if grace be granted, we shall go on, or let us go on, brethren, to the perfection of Christian knowledge and experience. Let us not waste our time, but, trusting to God, let us strive to make improvement. The remark of Calvin brings out the idea well: "Neque enim hoc in hominis manu possum, ut quoties libuerit, a carceribus ad metam transiliat: sed singulare esse Dei donum, cursus nostri confectionem."

Out of these verses, as thus expounded, the solemn warning which immediately follows most naturally springs. The duty of moving onwards is of paramount importance. By continuing in your past negligence, you expose yourselves to the greatest dangers. Your indifference to the truth, your imperfect acquaintance with its principles, expose you to the arts of the designing ; and by continuing careless and indifferent, you may plunge yourselves at last into the dreadful guilt and ruin of apostasy. Keep back from such a doom. Move on with alacrity in your Christian course : ἀδύνατον γὰρ τοὺς ἀπαξ φωτιο θέντας, γενσαμένους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου, καὶ μετόχους γενηθέντας, Πνείματος ἀγίου, καὶ καλὸν γενσαμένους Θεοῦ ρῆμα, δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰώνος, καὶ παραπεδόντας πάλιν ἀνακαίνιζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν, ἀναστραυροῦντας ἐαυτοὺς τὸν νιὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας.

WILLIAM LINDSAY, D.D.

(To be continued.)

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## The Preacher's Finger-Post.

### PHASES OF CHRISTIAN PIETY.

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things : and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”—1 Tim. vi. 11, 12.

HAVING referred to the moral dangers connected with a greedy pursuance of worldly wealth, the apostle here turns back suddenly, and proceeds in a most emphatic and direct address to Timothy. His soul seems to have taken new fire, and he exclaims, “O man of God,” an expression which identifies Timothy with the illustrious teachers of the old dispensation. (See 2 Peter

1—21.) The text presents phases of Christian piety.

I. It is a FLIGHT. “Flee these things.” What things ? All the allurements of wealth, and all the evils consequent upon an inordinate love of money. The word translated “flee” here means to betake one’s self to flight. It expresses the action of one who, panic-stricken, rushes away from the dreaded evil. Christian piety urges a man to flee with all haste from *sin* as the most terrible of all evils. It is more terrible to him than the breath of a pestilence, the vibrations of an earthquake, or the approach of a thunderstorm. To flee as Lot from the burning Sodom.

II. It is a PURSUANCE. "Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." These may include, (1.) Social rectitude. (2.) Genuine religion. (3.) Gospel truth. (4.) Heavenly love. (5.) Magnanimity of soul. "Patience" and "meekness." These are the objects which are pursued; towards these the soul runs with earnest steps. (Gal. v. 22, 23.) In these man's *dignity* and *blessedness* consist.

III. It is a BATTLE. "Fight the good fight of faith." Christian piety is a moral fight. It is a "good fight." It is waged by Divine authority, and is unquestionably right. Its consequences, too, are good. It destroys not existence, but the curses of existence—ignorance, selfishness, and impiety. It is a fight of *faith*." Faith means either the doctrine or the conviction, the objective or the subjective thing. It is a "fight of faith" in both senses. It is *for* the doctrine and *by* the conviction.

IV. It is a SEIZURE. "Lay hold on eternal life." "Eternal life is the *summum bonum*. As the athlete, when approaching the end of his course, bends forward, stretches forth his hand, and grasps the prize which he runs for, so Christian piety stretches out its hand to seize "eternal life," as its chief good. The seizing of eternal life by the genuine Christian is

(1), According to his Divine call—"Wherunto thou art also called." Christianity does not call its disciples to worldly riches and grandeur, but to eternal life. (2.) According to his profession. "And hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." Timothy made a public profession of his religion, and his profession meant a renunciation of sin, and a pursuance of holiness.

V. It is a TRUST. "Keep the commandment."\* All Christian profession means this.

CONCLUSION.—What is our life? Is it a flight from sin in all its forms? Is it a pursuance of virtue? Is it a battle for the true? Is it a stretching forth for eternal life as the grand prize of being?

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#### A HUSHING WORD TO THE COMPLAINER.

"Wherefore doth a living man complain."—Lamen. iii. 39.

THERE are two classes of men. First: Those who suffer much and complain little. There are those whose trials are exceedingly great, and who seldom utter a murmuring word. Secondly: There are those who suffer little and complain much. Many of the greatest complainers on earth are found amongst those on whose path Providence throws scarcely the shadow of a trial. Com-

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\* For remarks on this, see a Germ in the present number.

plainers abound. We meet them whithersoever we wend our steps. We offer them a hushing word or two.

I. Your trials are to a great extent **SELF-PRODUCED**. Many of the trials under which men murmur are brought upon themselves. Men complain of their *physical* sufferings, but how often are these brought on by a violation of the laws of health. Men complain of *matrimonial* annoyances, but these they brought on themselves by their imprudent choice of a companion. Men complain of their *parental* sorrows, but the waywardness and the depravity of their children often result from their own neglect of parental duty or bad example. Men complain of *business* trials, bad debts, disappointments, ill success, but often these come through reckless speculation, laziness, or bad management.

II. Your trials are **NOT EQUAL TO YOUR DESERTS**. Through your transgression of the eternal laws of rectitude, you have forfeited all claim to happiness, you have rendered yourselves liable to unmitigated and everlasting suffering. Your trials as compared with your deserts are but as a spark to Etna, drop to the Atlantic.

III. Your trials are **MIXED WITH MANY MERCIES**. You live in a beautiful world. There is much social love around you, ready to administer to your

relief, the means of spiritual improvement are at your service. Put your trials in the scales against your mercies, and they will be found as feathers to lead.

IV. Your trials may be **CONVERTED INTO BLESSINGS**. They may be turned into moral medicine to heal the diseases of your soul. "They are capable of yielding the peaceful fruits of righteousness, and of working out for you an eternal weight of glory."

**CONCLUSION.**—Wherefore then do you complain? Hush your murmurings, and say, "It is of the Lord's mercy we are not consumed, because His compassion fails not."

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**DEATH—A WAY.**

"When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return."—Job xvi. 22.

DR. BERNARD thus renders the text, "For the numbered years assigned to me will come one after another, and then I shall go the way whence I shall not return."

Death is **A WAY**. "I shall go the way." Death is (1) **A strange way**. Millions have gone that way, but none have ever returned to describe it. (2) It is a *lonely* way. There are no companions in that road, each must go alone. (3) It is a *solemn* way. What does it take us from? Whither does it conduct us? (4) It is an *unavoidable* way. It is impossible to escape that way.

We must step into it and down to its mysterious end. The text suggests two remarks concerning this way—

I. Death is a way SOON TO BE ENTERED. "When a few are come." "The number of years assigned to me, then I shall go the way," &c. Those who are the most remote from this way are only divided by a few years. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten." Millions on this earth may say, when a few months, a few weeks, a few days may come. The way is not far off, it is very near.

II. Death is a way NEVER TO BE RE-TRAVELED. "I shall not return,"—not return (1) to my *business*, (2) to my *family*, (3) to my *church*. No more return, then let us do all that is necessary to be done on this earth before we enter the grave.

SKETCHES FROM GENESIS.

"ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION FOR SODOM."

"And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" &c.—Gen. xviii. 23—33.

We shall offer three remarks.

I. The basis of his intercession. First: The value of purity. "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" In whatever way the righteous were treated on the earth, Abraham knew they were heaven's favourites, and that they were valuable in

God's sight; of this he had an instance in the life of Noah who was too precious to be lost in the deluge. The amount of true purity in the heart is the right criterion to estimate a man's value. Our greatness consists not in external wealth, but in a soul filled with peace, obtained from the consciousness of endeavouring to live a pure life. If pure, our privilege great. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Secondly: God's justice. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The sense of right within rejected the idea that the righteous would have to perish with the wicked, and no distinction made between those who serve God and the reprobate and ungodly. If there would be no manifestation of His love to the righteous the glory of the Divine government would be clouded. It required great moral courage to appeal to *justice*: this can be done under the Gospel dispensation, because the plan of salvation has been perfectly accomplished.

II. The earnestness of the intercessor. His earnestness is seen. First: In the responsible position he took upon himself. This he did willingly; perceiving the danger of the city, he was moved to intercede, though the responsibility was great—to go between God and man. When born again, our responsibility increases, so that it

is our duty to labour for our own safety and the safety of others as well, and to intercede for them in our prayers. Is this responsibility felt so as to make us earnest in our petitions on behalf of the unconverted? Secondly: In the depraved characters for whom intercession was made. Evidently Abraham had some knowledge of their moral condition previous to the arrival of the angels; now he was informed that their wickedness could no longer be tolerated; nevertheless, he intercedes on their behalf. This shows the intensity of his love for man, and pleads that the whole city should be spared for the sake of ten righteous persons. No character is too depraved to be the subject of prayer to God; as long as a particle of humanity remains in man he is worth saving. Thirdly: In his repeated attempts. Humanly speaking, the first mark was low enough. "Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city." From this he gradually descended to ten. In these repeated efforts he seems as if unwilling to leave the case as hopeless; and the greatest humility is manifested throughout. In this he is an example to us; in our prayers the greatest earnestness and humility ought to be felt. The mercy seat is not to be left without repeated efforts made to obtain the blessing.

III. The failure of his intercession. First: From his igno-

rance of sin in all its aspects. Sin was the cause of this judgment; to Abraham *some* of its aspects were known, but he had no conception of all its painful results: so his intercession ceaseth after descending to "ten righteous." If he understood sin better, he would have pleaded for one's sake, and even if there were none righteous in the city. Secondly: From an inadequate conception of God's mercy. He rapidly and successfully descended forty steps on the ladder—from fifty to ten—to find the depth of God's mercy; but there were steps beyond these which Abraham could now descend. God's mercy is deeper than the deepest pollution of man. Infinite as God himself.

CONCLUSION.—The mind, when reading this history, naturally runs to another Intercessor. First: Whose intercession availeth. Secondly: Who *ever liveth* to intercede.

Uckfield. Cymro.

#### SOLOMON'S DOMINION.

"So king Solomon was king over all Israel. And these were the princes which he had," &c.—*Kings iv. 1—28.*

THIS chapter consists for the most part of a list of Solomon's servants, and a detail of their duties. Solomon is to be regarded as a type of Christ, and his peaceful and prosperous reign was symbolical of the

perfect and peaceful reign of Christ.

I. Note the fact, that his dominion was **PERFECT AND COMPLETE**. "So Solomon was king over all Israel." See also verse 21. "The river," *i.e.*, Euphrates, in the north and east. "They brought presents." It was from these countries of the east that the wise men brought offerings to the infant Saviour. (Matt. ii. 11.) "All the days of his life." Those who become subjects of Christ's kingdom are to be such for ever: "to his kingdom there shall be no end."

II. This perfect dominion was in **FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY**. (Gen. xv. 18.) So the universal spread of Christ's kingdom has been foretold. (Ps. ii. 8.)

III. This dominion was **CHARACTERISED BY UNIVERSAL PEACE**. "He had peace on all sides round about him." (Verse 24.) See Ps. lxxii. 7. Christ came to bring peace; He is called "the Prince of Peace." At His birth the angels proclaimed "Peace on earth."

IV. It was characterised by **PERFECT SAFETY**. (See verse 25.) The government of the king was so wise and judicious that violence and theft were comparatively unknown. All neighbouring kingdoms being subject to his sway, his subjects were in no fear of attacks from them.

V. **THE SUBJECTS OF SOLO-**

**MON'S KINGDOM WERE NUMEROUS AND HAPPY.** (Verse 20.) See Gen. xxii. 17.

Firstly: The multitude of the redeemed at last. (Rev. vii. 9.)

Secondly: The privilege of the Christian is to be happy. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," &c. (Rom. xiv. 17.)

VI. **THE AFFAIRS OF SOLOMON'S KINGDOM WERE MANAGED BY SUBORDINATE SERVANTS.** Diversity of labourers in Christ's kingdom. (See Eph. iv. 11.) All can help, but only by working in the sphere which God appoints.

VII. It was the duty of all **HIS SUBJECTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUPPORT OF HIS KINGDOM**. Each of the twelve officers mentioned in verse 7 had a district under his charge, from which in his turn he supplied the table of the king.

VIII. **ALL WHO CAME TO SOLOMON'S TABLE WERE FED.** "They lacked nothing." (Verse 27.)

*Dawlish.*      F. WAGSTAFF.

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#### NO TEMPLE IN HEAVEN.

"I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."—Rev. xxi. 22.

I. The **IMPORT** of this. What does this import? First: That there are no special **SACRED PLACES** in heaven. Temples here are places set apart for worship. All heaven

is holy. Secondly : That there are no specially SACRED PERSONS in heaven. Temples here have their priests and official ministers. Thirdly : That there are no special SACRED SEASONS in heaven. Temples here have their times for worship. Fourthly : That there are no special SACRED SERVICES in heaven. All services in heaven would be sacred.

## II. The REASON for this.

Why there is no temple in heaven. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." First : His presence renders all temple *instructions* unnecessary. Secondly : All temple *worship* unnecessary. Thirdly : All temple *commemoration* unnecessary. Fourthly : All temple *convocation* unnecessary.

DAVID SMITH, D.D.

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# Seeds of Sermons on the Book of Proverbs.

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## GOD AND THE HUMAN RACE.

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the hearts. To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."—Prov. xxi. 1—3.

In these verses we have God unfolded to us—

I. As the CONTROLLER OF HUMAN HEARTS. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." Some suppose there is an allusion to a gardener directing the rills of water through the different parts of his ground, and that the comparison is between the ease with which the gardener does this and the ease with which the Almighty controls the purposes and volitions of the human soul. First : *This is an undoubted fact.*

(1.) *A priori* reasoning renders this obvious. The God of infinite wisdom must have a purpose to answer in relation to the existence and history of the human race. He has a purpose not only in the rise and fall of empires, but in all the events that happen in the individual history of the obscure as well as the illustrious. But unless He has a control over the workings of the human heart and the volitions of the human soul, how could this purpose be realized ? If He controls not the thoughts and the impulses of the human mind, He has no control over the human race, and His purposes have no guarantee for their fulfilment. But God says, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;" and hence He must be the Master of the human soul, turning all its

rills of thought and feeling at His pleasure. (2.) History demonstrates the truth. Abimelech's heart was in the hand of the Lord for good. (Gen. xx. 6.) Pharaoh's heart was turned towards Joseph. The heart of the Babylonish despot was turned towards Daniel and his captive brethren. The hearts of the Jews in relation to Christ were under Divine control. Secondly: *This fact interferes not with human responsibility.* Though the Creator has an absolute control over all the workings of our minds, yet we are conscious that we are free in all our volitions and actions. Though the reconciliation of these two facts transcends our philosophy, they involve no absurdity. Suppose a man of great insight into character and great experience as to how certain circumstances affect certain organizations, predicted that if a certain person whom he thoroughly understood was placed in certain conditions, a certain course of conduct on his part would be the inevitable result: that person, without knowing the prediction, falls into those circumstances and pursues the course of conduct identical with that foretold. Did the knowledge of the prophet exercise any coercion at all upon the mind of this individual? Certainly not. It is therefore not impossible to conceive of Him who knows all men's organizations, and all the circumstances through which they are to pass, carrying on His purposes and yet leaving them in perfect possession of their freedom and their accountability.

In these verses we have God unfolded to us—

II. As the JUDGE OF HUMAN CHARACTER. "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts." The sentiment expressed in these words we have met with before. There is in all probability a connection between this verse and the preceding one. And its connection suggests—First: *That God judges men's characters not according to their own estimate.* Men generally are so vain that they form a high opinion of themselves, but this estimate may be the very reverse of God's. Secondly: *That God judges men's characters not according to the result of their conduct.* Though they may unwittingly work out His plans, they do not approve themselves to Him on that account. The cruel treatment which Joseph's brethren inflicted on him subserved the Divine purpose; still it was not less wicked on that account. The crucifixion of Christ by the Jews was according to the Divine plan; yet the deed was the most heinous of all crimes. Thirdly: *That God judges men's characters by the heart.* "The Lord pondereth the hearts." The essence of the character is in the motive. "The Lord weigheth the spirits."

In these verses we have God unfolded to us—

III. As the APPROVER OF HUMAN GOODNESS. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." This sentiment is frequently expressed in the Bible.\* (1.) "Sacrifice," at best is only circumstantially good—

\* 1 Sam. xv. 22; Isa. i. 11—15; lxvi. 3, 4; Jer. vii. 21—23; Hosea vi. 6; Micah vi. 6—8; Matt. xxi. i. 33.

rectitude is essentially so. (2.) Sacrifice, at best, is only the means and expression of good—rectitude is goodness itself. (3.) God accepts the moral without the ceremonial, but never the ceremonial without the moral. (4.) The universe can do without the ceremonial, but not without the moral. "Justice and judgment" are the everlasting foundations of God's throne.

**CONCLUSION.**—How great is God! He controls all hearts, and approves of all goodness. He "is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders."

**THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED  
IS SIN.**

"An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked is sin."—Prov. xxi. 4.

The word "plowing" in the margin is rendered "light." "The light of the wicked." The marginal references, of course, have precisely the same authority as those in the text, and are not unfrequently more faithful to the original. "The verse," says Dr. Wardlaw, "is remarkably laconic—the loftiness of eyes—pride of heart—the light of the wicked, sin." The meaning seems to be that in the prosperity of the wicked (for light is the symbol of prosperity) there is sin. This is the subject. The words teach three thoughts:—

I. That the wicked are **proud**. "An high look and a proud heart." The first of these is but the expression of the second, the "high look," or, as in margin, haughtiness of eyes. Pride arises from ignorance. First: From an ignorance of *self*. The man who knows himself even as a

creature, who knows how insignificant he is as compared with the universe, will be humble; and much more the man who knows himself as a sinner, and who understands his moral wretchedness and dangers. Secondly: From an ignorance of *God*. Who that has any conception of the Infinite, could be proud in His presence? He who has a glimpse of Him will fall down like Isaiah, and exclaim, "Woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips." Pride and wickedness go together and both are an "abomination to the Lord." The words teach,—

II. That the wicked **SOMETIMES HAVE PROSPERITY**. "The plowing—or rather the light—of the wicked." Light in the Old Testament is the symbol of prosperity. The wicked often prosper in the world. They amass fortunes, and take the leading positions in social life. First: *This is often a perplexity to the good.* "Wherefore do the wicked prosper?" &c. In all ages true souls have thus cried out. Secondly: *This reveals the wonderful patience of God.* How great the forbearance of Him who allows His enemies to revel in palaces and sit on thrones! Thirdly: *This prophesies a future retribution.* There must come a reckoning day, a period for balancing all human accounts. The words teach—

III. That the prosperity of the wicked is **sin**. "The plowing of the wicked is sin." Indeed everything a wicked man does is sin, whether he plows, sows, or reaps, whether he buys or sells, whether he prays or swears, every act is sin. "Every thought in the imagination of his heart

is evil continually." As he that is born of God cannot sin, so he that is wicked cannot but sin : he has no good intentions, and he can do no good acts. "Holy intention," says Bishop Taylor, "is to the actions of a man that which the soul is to the body, or form to its matter, or the root to the tree, or the sun to the world, or the fountain to the river, or the base to a pillar. Without these the body is a dead trunk, the matter is sluggish, the tree is a block, the world is darkness, the river is quickly dry, the pillar rushes into flatness and ruin, and the action is sinful, or unprofitable and vain."

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#### THE RIGHT AND WRONG ROAD TO PLENTY.

"The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness ; but of every one that is hasty only to want. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death. The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them ; because they refuse to do judgment."—Prov. xxi. 5—7.

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business ? he shall stand before kings ; he shall not stand before mean men."—Prov. xxii. 29.

To have *plenty* of a good thing is felt by all to be desirable. Money is a good thing : it increases not only man's means of enjoyment, but man's power of usefulness. Knowledge is a good thing ; the mind without it is in a cell, narrow, and dark. Great is the blessing of plenteous knowledge. The plenteousness in the text, however, refers to worldly wealth, and points to the right and wrong way of gaining it.

I. The **RIGHT** road. "The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness." Dili-

gence stands opposed—First : *To laziness*. Frequently have we had occasion to notice Solomon's reprobation of idleness. Idleness has been called Satan's seed-time—the mother of wanton children—the rust and canker of the soul—the devil's cushion and pillow. Diligence is the opposite of this. It is industrious activity. It stands opposed—Secondly : *To rashness* : It is here put in contrast to hastiness. "But of every one that is hasty only to want." The hasty man has no *plan*. When he works it is desultory and spasmodic. The hasty man has no *perseverance*. To-day he is all enthusiasm in his labour, his both hands are stretched out, and with might and main he struggles for plenty ; to-morrow he is in a state of collapse. The diligent man in opposition to this works by a *plan*, and works with *perseverance*. He begins in earnest, and goes on to the end in earnest conquering difficulties, and reaping rewards, thus he gets rich. "Seest thou a man diligent in business ? he shall stand before kings ; he shall not stand before mean men."

II. The **WRONG** road. First : *Falsehood* is a wrong road. "The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death." It is often the shortest road to wealth, and hence the most popular ; it is crowded with travellers. The commercial atmosphere is infested with fallacies ; shops swarm with lies. Falsehood is a great fortune-maker here in our England, and although it is a short and popular road it is ultimately a ruinous one. "It is a vanity tossed to

and fro of them that seek death." What is tossed to and fro—the treasure or the falsehood that obtained it? The latter, I think. A lie is a prolific thing. One falsehood creates many, one cheat produces another. There is a tossing to and fro. The time comes when the swindle is discovered, and then there is ruin. The men who gain wealth by falsehood are "seeking death." Secondly: *Dishonesty* is a wrong road. "The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them." Falsehood and fraud are twins, lies and robbery go together. Dishonesty, like falsehood, is a rapid, and, alas! a very common road to wealth. But this also leads to ruin. "The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them." It often does so here,

when the swindle is discovered and brought into the court of justice: it will inevitably do so at last when the Great Judge shall call every man to an account. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Unrighteous gain is a dear bargain. Money got by fraud and dishonesty will one day ruin its possessor as the thirty pieces of silver did the foul betrayer of our Lord. Be honest not because "honesty is the best policy," for I agree with Archbishop Whately that he who acts on this principle is not an honest man—but because honesty is right.

"Dishonour waits on perfidy. A man  
Should blush to *think* a falsehood : 'tis  
the crime  
Of cowards."

JOHNSON.

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## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

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### THE LAST DAYS OF ST. BONIFACE.

THOUGH upwards of seventy-five years of age, he determined to make one last effort to win over the still pagan portion of Friesland, and to accomplish what Willibrord had begun. Bidding, therefore his successor a solemn farewell, he ordered preparations to be made for the journey. Something told him that he should never return, and therefore he desired that with his books, amongst which was a treatise of St. Ambrose on "The Advantages of Death," his shroud also might be put up. Then, with a retinue of three priests, three deacons, four monks, and forty-one laymen,

he embarked on board a vessel, A.D. 755, and sailed down the Rhine. At Utrecht he was joined by Eoban, an old pupil whom he had placed in charge of the see, and then together they advanced into the eastern part of Frisia, and commenced their labors. For a time all went well. The missionaries were welcomed by several of the tribes, and were enabled to lay the foundation of several churches. Gladdened by the accession of many converts, they at length reached the banks of the river Burde, not far from Dockum. It was the month of June, and the festival of Whit-sunday drew near. Boniface had dismissed many who had

been baptized, bidding them return on the eve of Whit-sunday to receive the further rite of confirmation. On the morning of the appointed day, June 5, the noise could be plainly heard of an advancing multitude, and the brandishing of spears and the clang of arms told only too plainly on what errand they were bound. The heathen party, enraged at the success of the daring missionary, had selected this day for a signal act of vengeance. Some of the archbishop's retinue counselled resistance, and were already preparing to defend themselves, when he stepped forth from his tent, and gave orders that no weapon should be lifted, but that all should await the crown of martyrdom. "Let us not return evil for evil," said he; "the long-expected day has come, and the time of our departure is at hand. Strengthen ye yourselves in the Lord, and he will redeem your souls. Be not afraid of those who can only kill the body, but put all your trust in God, who will speedily give you an eternal reward, and an entrance into his heavenly kingdom." Calmed by his words, his followers bravely awaited the onset of their enemies, who rushed upon them and quickly despatched them. The archbishop himself, we are told, when he saw that his hour was come, took a volume of the Gospels, and making it a pillow for his head, stretched forth his neck for the blow, and in a few moments received his release. The heathen speedily ransacked the tents of the missionaries; but instead of the treasures they had expected, found only the book-cases which Boniface had

brought with him. These they rifled, scattering some of the volumes over the plain, and hiding others among the marshes, where they remained till they were afterwards picked up and reverently removed to the monastery of Fulda, together with the remains of the great missionary. Thus died the father of German Christian civilization. A Teuton by language and kindred, he had been the apostle of Teutons. Combining singular conscientiousness with earnest piety, dauntless zeal with practical energy, he had been enabled to consolidate the work of earlier Irish and Anglo-Saxon missionaries; he had revived the decaying energies of the Frankish Church; he had restored to her the long dormant activity of the Ecclesiastical Council; he had covered central and western Germany with the first necessary elements of civilization. Monastic seminaries as Améneberg and Ohrdruf, Fritzlar and Fulda, had risen amidst the Teutonic forests. The sees of Salzburg and Freisingen, of Regensburg and Passau, testified to his care of the Church of Bavaria; the see of Erfurt told of labours in Thuringia; that of Buraburg, in Hesse; that of Wurzburg in Franconia; while his metropolitan see at Mayence, having jurisdiction over Worms and Spires, Tengres, Cologne, and Utrecht, was a sign that even before his death the German Church had already advanced beyond its first missionary stage. *Apostles of Mediæval Europe, by the Rev. G. F. Maclear B.D.; Part II., (Sunday Library Service), published by Macmillan and Co.*



## A HOMILY

ON

### *Vails.*

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“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.”—2 Cor. iii, 15.

**H**E whole of this chapter is a kind of episode in which the Apostle vindicates his apostleship both in its authority and dignity. It would seem as if, among the Corinthians, there were some who had ventured, on some ground or other, to throw suspicion on the validity of his apostolic function. Now there were more ways than one in which he might vindicate that validity. He might adopt the historic method, as indeed he did on some occasions, and give a full history of his life, his conversion on his way to Damascus, and his supernatural call to spread the faith he once destroyed. He preferred, however, at present, a method more direct and practical. He reminds the Corinthians that he needs no letters of commendation either to them or from them, as if he were a suspected man. The certificates of his apostolic authority are found in the results of his apostolic labours. “Epistles,” he says—“I need no epistles to tell the world that I am Paul, a servant of Christ by the will of God, and a divinely appointed preacher of the Truth.

Ye are our epistles, written in our hearts, known and read of all men. Nay, you are more than an epistle. We are but the pen, and another has held it. Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink or any such fading substance, but with the very Spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in *fleshy tables of the heart.*" And well might he declare the Corinthians to be his epistle, when on another occasion he reminds them of what they were when first he saw them : "Thieves, adulterers, fornicators," and such like, and what they have been made by the Gospel. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified ;" what better testimonials did the Apostle need than men who had thus passed from death to life ? But he disclaims all personal honour : "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the *letter*, but of the *spirit*—for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Then his imagination takes fire, and he proceeds to contrast the two dispensations of the Divine revelation, showing in several striking particulars the surpassing glory of the dispensation of life through Jesus Christ. Not that this surpassing glory is seen by all, for some of the Jews not perceiving that the coming in of a better hope abolished the economy of types and shadows, still cling to that abolished economy, and this because their eyes are blinded ; for when Moses is read the *vail is on their hearts.* This expression is so remarkable and so profound, and points so strikingly, not simply to a fact which is true of the Jews, but to the same fact as still exemplified on a wider scale, that I venture to press it upon your attention this morning.

It is a question which cannot well fail to arrest a thoughtful mind, how it comes to pass that notwithstanding the fact that the Gospel is the truth of God, and the only truth by which we can be made wise unto salvation, the number of

those who believe in it is so small compared with the number of those who do not believe in it. Our nation has had the Gospel in it more or less now for the space of 1600 years. For a considerable portion of this period this Gospel has doubtless been obscured and oppressed with human inventions, which have greatly weakened its power and dimmed its heavenly brightness, and frequently its chief representatives have been but sorry specimens of humankind. But since the Reformation which stripped it of these pernicious admixtures, three centuries have elapsed, and though upwards of a century even of this reformed period was marked by restrictions upon our liberty of prophesying, yet we have had more than one hundred years during which we could not only worship under our own "vines and fig-trees" but preach everywhere without restraint. Week by week Sabbaths have come round, and the Gospel has been expounded and enforced ; and all sorts of agencies have been established for the purpose of carrying the heavenly light into the streets and lanes of our cities. And while we must be devoutly thankful for the blessing which has crowned all these methods of Christian beneficence, yet, we have still to meet the broad fact in the face that not only is there a minority of the people federated in actual Christian fellowship, but even assembling in houses of prayer, and manifesting even the faintest sympathy with spiritual things. It is a startling circumstance that in no town of our country, and perhaps in no village, is there one-half of the population found within the walls of Christian sanctuaries this day. This fact has many sides which we cannot examine. It is, however, a fact that should lie heavily on the conscience of every serious man who believes in sin, and salvation, and ruin, and in the powers of the world to come. But let us look at a somewhat narrower aspect of the same fact : there are few if any congregations in which the unbelievers do not outnumber the believers, and in which, if we may roughly suppose that on the whole the church represents

real Christians, and the congregation on the whole represents those who are not Christians, those who are marching to heaven are not fewer than those who are marching to hell. This fact, too, even as thus narrowed, has many sides. If we ask the question how it comes to pass, no one answer will suffice to meet it. The dim light which many of us who call ourselves Christians shed, may partly account for, though it cannot excuse, still less defend, the indifference and unbelief which so widely prevail. The blame of our neglect of duty can seldom be wholly laid at the door of another ; and in cases where we know our duty, nothing can absolve us from guilt if we fail to discharge it. Now, we presume that a considerable portion of every congregation as distinct from the church knows something about the Gospel, and in a sense believes it, at least does not contemptuously reject it. But still the Gospel is not received into the heart—it does not mould the life—its promises are not enjoyed—its supports are not realized—its commands are not obeyed. How is this? We propose this morning to look at the answer to this question as given by St. Paul, when he speaks of the Jews of his own time, who when Moses was read, understood him not, and believed not in the Saviour of whom he witnessed not merely by his words, but by the sacrifices and services whieh under the teaching of God he appointed as types of the coming Immanuel, because the *vail was upon their hearts*. The *vail* on the heart ; this simple expression is quite sufficient to account for the greatest part of all the unbelief which prevails in a Christian community. It may give a different account of itself, but we believe that the true account is this ; the *vail is on the heart*.

It is a mistake into which many fall, that if there be only sufficient evidence of any truth whether it be religious or of any other kind, and if there be ordinary intellectual power in a man which enables him to appreciate the evidence, that then faith *must* follow as a matter of course.

That faith ought to follow in such circumstances we allow. Man has no right to demand more as a condition of his believing anything than that he shall have the natural power of understanding, and a competent amount of evidence. But we must be strangely ignorant of a whole world of facts if we do not know that a man's nature is found at present the two things—sufficient evidence, and sufficient faculty do not avail in all cases to carry conviction to the heart. Other circumstances come in and interfere with the natural result, circumstances which so far as concerns the Gospel, render necessary the influence of the Holy Spirit to remove them so that the light of the Gospel may penetrate without distinction the *eye* of the soul, and fill it with the beams of divine love. These circumstances are *vails*, vails that lie not outside the man, but within him. The vision of an object may be rendered impossible in either of two ways at least. There is a mountain that rears its majestic head to the sky: you may spend weeks in its neighbourhood, and yet never see it once. It may be shrouded in mist through which the most vigorous sight cannot pierce. The *vail* is then on the mountain, and we must wait until it is uplifted, or it dissolves in rain. Or, the mountain may be enshrouded, and still unseen, for the eye may be weak, or covered with thick films. The *vail* is then on the *eye*. This latter case is the one which fitly illustrates the language of the Apostle when he says that even to this day, when Moses is read, the *vail* is upon the *heart*, upon the *heart*, not upon *Moses*: he is *read*, *read distinctly*, *read* too in the light of a purer and brighter dispensation which has flashed its fulfilling beams on what before was dim or dark; but even though *read* he is not understood, for the *vail* is upon the *heart*. Let us look at a few of the *vails*, for they are many, which are upon the *hearts* of men in these days, and which account for the fact that the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ doth not shine into them.

(1.) First, then, there is the *vail* of *human depravity*, or natural corruption. Do not resent this statement, as if it were simply a theological dogma, a watchword of orthodoxy. With me, at least, it would have no force in such a capacity, for I endeavour with some degree of earnestness to look at facts apart from creeds. With the conceptions which I have of God as He is revealed to us in His Word, I find it impossible to believe that man is now what man was as he came from the creative hand. No one surely will say that even the best man we know would reflect credit upon his Creator, had he been made exactly as he now is, with so many sinful tendencies in him, which he feels it to be so hard to resist. And whatever you might think of the best man, most assuredly he would not venture himself to throw upon his Maker the responsibility of not a little within him of which he is conscious, as unsanctified passion, and languid desires after holiness. Nor do I see how any thoughtful man can maintain the white-paper theory of our nature, which affirms that we all came into the world with a clean, pure soul, as much inclined to good as evil, or indeed having no inclination either way, and which accounts for what we are, entirely upon the principle of the influence of circumstances and education. How any one who has had to deal with children, and to watch them from their earliest infancy, and who has seen the early play and development of their passions, can maintain such a theory passes my comprehension. Whatever account men may choose to give of the fact, it seems to us that no fact can be more clearly written on the face of history than this, that the heart is not as much in love with truth as with error, with goodness as with evil, with God as with itself, and that ignorance is not the sole cause of its perverseness and sin. It may sound a very plausible principle, "Teach men the truth, and they will believe it ; teach men the right, and they will do it ;" as if all the follies and vices of mankind were the consequences of not knowing better. But to say

nothing of religion at all, does any one seriously believe that ignorance explains all the wickedness of the world? Ignorance of what? Ignorance that it is wickedness? Is it so then, that no man is now doing wrong with the consciousness that it is wrong. Is drunkenness ignorance? Is it ignorance of the fact, that drunkenness impoverished a man's purse? Is it ignorance of the fact, that it deranges and shatters the physical health? Is it ignorance of the fact that it consumes time? Is it ignorance of the fact that it begets social disrespect? Is it ignorance of the fact that in tens of thousands of instances it casts its victims into a premature grave? Is it ignorance of the fact that it plunges numberless households yearly into want, and beggary, and shame? There is no form of vice which receives more ample and severe instruction than drunkenness. It surely is impossible for us to have more available knowledge upon its character, tendency, and results than we now have, and yet its indulgence is neither discontinued nor abated. I have said nothing of the religious aspects of the sin, or of the consequences which because they are eternal and hidden from view, some might be disposed to treat as visionary. The results I have mentioned are clear, palpable, glaring, burnt (if I may so speak) into the very brain and flesh of the victims of intemperance. To say that men would not drink till they are drunken if they knew better, is to trifle and to mock. They do know better. Their knowledge is keen and oppressive. It lies on them as a load of remorse. Nay, they know so much of the evils of drunkenness that they drink to escape the knowledge, to drown the disturbing and protesting voice of conscience in deep and unreflecting stupor. Where then is the *vail* in such a case which prevents their reformation? It is not over the consequences of their sin. It can only be upon their *heart*. The vice is indulged, because it is loved. Or if it be not loved as a vice, some at least of its sensations are loved, and are consciously enjoyed, in the full expectation that when their

brief pleasure is over, the usual retributions will be sure to follow. And what is true of this vice, is true also of man's general alienation from what is *good*. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. This is the chief veil which hides from us spiritual trust, and which hinders deep and efficacious convictions. It is a veil which seems as if driven into the very substance of the soul.

*Halifax.*

ENOCH MELLOR, M.A.

(*To be continued.*)

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## Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

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*Subject: PICTURE OF SUFFERING SAINTHOOD.*

“ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?  
Why art thou so far from helping me,” &c.—Psa. xxii.

**HISTORY.**—Although this is called “ a Psalm of David,” there is no certainty that he was the author. Some biblical critics ascribe it to Jeremiah, some to Hezekiah, some to the pious Jews collectively, and some to Jesus Christ. Those who regard David as speaking of himself in this psalm refer to 1 Sam. xxiii. 25, 26. “ Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David : wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul ; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.” But are the sufferings here described great enough to authorize the strong language of suffering implied in this psalm ? “ David,” says Hengstenberg, “ never was in such great trouble as is here described: his enemies never ‘ parted his clothes,’ or ‘ cast lots upon his vesture,’ even in the greatest heat of the conflict with Saul, to which alone we can look, he never was in that state of exhaustion, weakness and emaciation, which meets us in the subject of this psalm.” We are disposed to accept that view of the psalm which regards it as a **PICTURE OF SUFFERING SAINTHOOD**. The author, whether David or not, here de-

picts some righteous soul passing through scenes of suffering, and by prayer obtaining deliverance. Looking at the psalm in this light it may apply to the good man individually under suffering, to the true church under suffering, and especially to Him who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

**ANNOTATIONS.**—"To the chief musician, upon Aijeleth Shahar." The expression "Aijeleth Shahar" is rendered in the margin, "the hind of the morning." "The hind may be a poetical figure for persecuted innocence, and the morning, or rather dawn, for deliverance after long distress. Compare 2 Sam. i. 19; Prov. vi. 5; Isa. xiii. 14, with Isa. viii. 20; xvii. 11; lviii. 8-10; Hos. vi. 3; x. 15. The use of such emblems here is less surprising, as this psalm abounds in figures drawn from the animal kingdom." Some, however, translate the words "Aijeleth Shahar," the succor of him who early seeks.

Ver. 1.—"My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" Here the sufferer expresses his sense of Divine abandonment, he feels that God has deserted him. These words, with a slight variation, Christ used when on the cross to express the mysterious agony of his soul. "The cry, 'thou hast forsaken me,'" says Hengstenberg, "does not refer to a *real fact*, but it depends upon a *conclusion* which the sufferer draws from his desperate position.

Ver. 2.—"O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not," &c. Notwithstanding his "roaring," his wail of anguish, and his cry all day and all night, his God seemed to remain distant and afar off. Thou seemest utterly indifferent to my cries of intense distress.

Ver. 3.—"But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." This may mean, Thou art the glorious and perfect God who inhabitest the praises of Israel. God always dwells in the midst of the praises of the good.

Ver. 6.—"I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." This is said in contrast with the fathers, in the preceding verses, who trusted in God. Thou didst treat them as men. Thou art treating me as "a worm," a worthless reptile.

Ver. 7.—"All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip they shake the head, saying." The meaning here is that he was treated with scorn and derision. They showed their contempt by the jeering laugh, the sneering lip, the derisive shake of the head. This conduct was manifested in the most malignant manner to Christ on the cross. Matt. xxvii. 39.

Ver. 8.—"He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him." In the margin it says, "he rolled himself on the Lord," and the margin expresses the true meaning of the Hebrew word. Thus in Proverbs xvi. 3. "Roll thy works upon the Lord." The language is expressive. It means the rolling off of the load from our backs to that of another. (1 Peter v. 7.)

Ver. 12.—"Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round." In this, the next, and the sixteenth verses, the enemies of the

suffering saint are represented as "bulls," a roaring "lion," and "dogs." Bashan embraced the territory which was on the north of Jordan and east of Gilead, which was distinguished for the richness of its land. The bulls there were noted for their size, strength, and savageness. These creatures are suitable emblems of certain persecutors of the good. The lion, the most ravenous of ravenous creatures, and dogs, the most contemptible of animals to the Jewish mind. The men who engaged in the enormous crime of crucifying the Son of God are represented by these three kinds of animals, "bulls," "lions," "dogs."

Ver. 14.—"I am poured out like water." This means weakness: an expression similar to this is found in Joshua vii. 15. "The hearts of the people melted and became as water." It is customary for us to speak of ourselves, when in a state of debility, as being as weak as water. "All my bones are out of joint." Margin, "sundered." It is not necessary to suppose that dislocation is here meant, but feebleness. "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels." Additional figures to express weakness, utter prostration.

Ver. 17.—"I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me." He was reduced to such a skeleton that his very bones lay bare. His emaciated frame arrested the attention of his enemies, they stare upon him.

Ver. 18.—"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." This verse, whether intended to predict the conduct of Christ's enemies or not, was literally fulfilled in their diabolic conduct. Matt. xxvii. 25: Luke xxiii. 34: John xix. 23, 24.

Ver. 20.—"Deliver my soul from the sword." The word "soul" here means life, and the sword death. It means, deliver me from death. "My darling from the power of the dog." Margin, "my only one." Who is the darling—the only one, meant here? Evidently his life, the dearest thing to every man, is his life. Job ii. 4.

Ver. 21.—Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns." "The common version, 'unicorn,' rests on the authority of the Septuagint: but although the unicorn long regarded as a fabulous animal, has now been proved to be a real one, we have no reason to believe that it was ever known in Palestine, or to dissent from the common judgment of the learned, that the Hebrew word denotes the wild bull, or a species of the antelope, most probably the former."—Alexander. "Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns." i. e. from the midst of the most terrible danger.

Ver. 22.—"I will declare thy name unto my brethren," &c. His prayer has been answered, the Almighty has interposed, and his resolution is to celebrate the praise of his Maker unto his brethren. "In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." His gratitude shall be publicly expressed.

Ver. 23.—"Ye that fear the Lord, praise him. All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him: and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel." Not satisfied with celebrating His praises himself, he calls upon all the congregation to join him in the blessed work.

Ver. 24.—"For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the

*afflicted*,” &c. “This is the ground on which the fearers of the Lord are called upon to praise Him, namely, the faithful execution of His promise to the sufferer in this case, and the pledge thereby afforded of like faithfulness in every other.”—Alexander.

Ver. 26.—“*The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.*” The word “meek” here means the afflicted, the distressed, the miserable: and what is asserted is, that all such who call upon God in prayer shall be “satisfied,” filled with “praise” and “live for ever.”

Ver. 27.—“*All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*” There is a prediction of better times. The whole heathen world shall remember and turn to the one true and living God.

Ver. 28.—“*For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.*” This is the reason for the hope. “The kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations.”

Ver. 29.—“*All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.*” The general idea of this is, that all classes of people shall worship God. (1.) The rich. “They that be fat.” (2.) The poor. “They that bow down to the dust.” Those who are oppressed and crushed. (3.) The dying. “And none can keep alive his own soul,” or rather, he who cannot keep his own soul alive. The aged, the sick, the infirm, the dying.

Ver. 30.—“*A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.*” Alexander renders this—“Posterity shall serve him: it shall be related of the Lord to the generation.” “The last restriction to be done away is that of time. The effects of this salvation shall no more be confined to the present generations than to the higher classes of society, or the natural descendants of the patriarchs.” The word translated Lord here is not Jehovah but Adhonai, the name properly devoted to sovereignty. This verse has been elegantly rendered, “Our seed shall serve him: the story shall be told to them that come after.”

Ver. 31.—“*They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*” “The subjects of the first verbs are the ‘seed’ and ‘generation’ of the preceding verse. They shall come into existence, shall appear upon the scene. But even they shall not monopolise the knowledge thus imparted, but communicate it to a people now unborn, but then born, *i. e.*, to their own successors.” The verse may be rendered, “They shall come and declare his deliverance, yea, to the people who are not yet born shall they declare this.”

**ARGUMENT.**—“The Psalm,” says Hengstenberg, “naturally divides itself into three strophes, each containing a distinct subject of its own, of the same length, and consisting of ten verses, ver. 1—10, ver. 12—21, ver. 22—31. Between the first and second strophe a verse is thrown in, which connecting the two together, leads on from one to the other.”

In the first the sufferer pleads the necessity of God's interposition, in the second he urges it on the ground of his imminent danger, in the third he declares the glorious effects which would follow the answer of his prayer.

**HOMILETICS.**—Homiletically, we shall regard this psalm as a *sketch of suffering sainthood*, and, looking at it in this light, it falls into two general sections.

I. The prayer of the righteous under **GREAT SUFFERING**. And under this part two subjects of thought are presented. 1. The sufferings. They are ( $\alpha$ ) spiritual. ( $\beta$ ) social. (2.) The supplications. They are ( $\alpha$ ) intensely earnest. ( $\beta$ ) Ultimately successful.

II. The **RELIEF** of the righteous from great suffering. (1.) The instrumental cause of the relief. It was prayer. (2.) The blessed results of the relief. ( $\alpha$ ) The celebration of Divine goodness. ( $\beta$ ) The conversion of the world to the true God. ( $\gamma$ ) The celebration of His religion to the end of time.\*

\* Each of these points will be further amplified.



## A Homiletic Glance at the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

*Subject: Two Worlds of One Race.*

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”—Eph. v. 11—14.

**ANNOTATIONS.**—Ver. 11. “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*” No fault can be found with this translation. The exhortation here is not only to avoid  $\mu\eta\delta\upsilon\gamma\kappa\omega\tau\epsilon$ , the corrupt deeds of the depraved heathen, but to ‘ $\mathcal{E}\lambda\mathcal{E}\gamma\chi\epsilon\iota\mathcal{V}$ ’, reprove them. Do not connive at them or pass them over without notice, but take aggressive measures against them, try and raise the Gentiles to your own Christian standard.

Ver. 12.—“*For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.*” The abominable character of the “works of darkness” is here given as the reason for abstaining from them, and reprobating them. The sins to which the Apostle refers were so bad that they were done in “secret,” like the mysteries and orgies of heathenism, and so bad that it “is a shame even to speak” of them.

Ver. 13—“*But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.*”—Ellicott’s translation of this verse is—“But all these things when they are reproved are made manifest by the light, for everything that is made manifest is light.” The first clause of the verse seems a very common-place remark. It means light is the means of seeing what things are; and the other clause, “for everything that is made manifest is light,” expresses the transformative power of truth. The Gospel is the Organon of God, by it He effects the spiritual transformation of souls.

Ver. 14.—“*Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*” “He saith.” Who? The margin says it. But what is the “it?” Manifestly the Divine Word. But where? The utterances are not found in this form anywhere else in the Bible. There are passages in Isaiah something like it: Isa. xxv. 19; ix. 2; lx. 1. The Apostles, in quoting the Old Testament, sometimes combine several passages in the same quotation, and give, as the teachings of the Prophets, what is nowhere taught or asserted in express terms, but is abundantly implied in what they say. The substance of these words is taught in the Old Testament, and the Apostle gives it. The verse is translated by Dean Alford,—“Wherefore he saith, Up thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.” Paul uses the words to show that Christ is the Source of that light, which at once manifests wickedness and destroys it.

**HOMILETICS.**—The text may be regarded as a portraiture of two distinct worlds of men on this earth—the world of the wicked and the world of the Christian. Here we have—

- I. The world of WICKED men. The characteristics of these men are here indicated. First: They are *worthless*. Their works are “the unfruitful works of darkness.” Ungodly men live in moral darkness. The sun, which alone reveals things as they are in the spiritual world, shines not in their heavens. All the light they have are the electric flashes of an impure atmosphere. They work in the dark, and their works are “unfruitful.”
- That is “unfruitful” of good. The soil that is sterile as regards its capability of producing fruit is often fertile in its capacity to produce noxious weeds and poisonous herbs; so the ungodly soul, it is *unfruitful* in goodness, but prolific in crime.
- Secondly: They are *clandestine*. “Which are done of them

in secret." Though there may be an allusion here to the abominable mysteries which were celebrated in Greece under the screen of night and secrecy, it describes the general character of a sinful life. All is secret. Sin is necessarily hypocritical; it speaks in a false voice; it works under masks. The more corrupt the human soul the more sneakish and clandestine. The good alone can afford to be bland and open. Thirdly: They are *shameful*. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things." Heathenism has ever abounded, and still abounds with nameless iniquities. (Rom. i. 24-32). But sin in all its forms is a shameful thing. It is essentially disgraceful, disreputable, and ignominious. A man has only to think calmly of it in the light of conscience and God, in order to bring burning blushes to his cheek. Sin is a shame. Fourthly: They are *sleepy*. "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest." A sinful soul is sleepy in a moral sense. It is unconscious of its moral surroundings—it is filled with illusory dreams—it must one day be aroused to a sense of reality. Unlike natural sleep, moral sleep does not refresh and invigorate, but enervates and destroys. Fifthly: They are *mortal*. "Arise from the dead." Everywhere the Bible represents sin as a state of death. The sinful soul is like a corpse. It is odious, and the victim of external forces. Such is the world of wicked men around us. It is worthless—clandestine—shameful—sleepy—mortal. Here we have—

II. The world of **CHRISTIAN** men. These are represented by the Christians at Ephesus, the men to whom the Apostle is writing. This world has a work to do with the other—the dark world of wickedness around them. And it is here indicated. What is it?

First: *Separation*. "Have no fellowship." It does not mean, of course, that Christians are to have no intercourse or dealings with the ungodly. This could not be, and ought not to be if it could. It means, that they are to have no spiritual identification with them; no thoughts, purposes, or feelings alike. That, like Christ, they are to be "separate from sinners." Morally detached as the lamp from the darkness. "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a

railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner : with such an one no not to eat." (1 Cor. v. 11.) "Wherefore come out from amongst them," &c. (2 Cor. vi. 14—18.) Secondly : *Reprehension*. "But rather reprove them." "Reprove them" by *lip*. In the name of purity and truth expose and denounce their wickedness. Reprove them by *life*. Let the life stand in such a grand contrast to all that is sinful that it may be a standing rebuke. Thirdly : *Illumination*. "All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light." Hold forth the light of the Gospel in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation." Fourthly : *Resuscitation*. "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead." Thunder in the ear of the sleeper ; speak life into the heart of the dead. There is living light for all in Christ. "Christ shall give thee light." "He is the Light of the World." The idea of this verse seems to be, that if Christians will use all their efforts to convert men, they may expect Christ to shine upon them, and bless them. The "light" that comes from Him is a soul-quickenin light. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live." (John v. 25.) Elijah raised the dead, so did the Apostles. We, also, in God's great name can raise the dead—dead souls ; the resurrection of a soul is a far grander work than the resurrection of a body. Let us sound the blast of the Gospel trumpet over moral cemeteries, and the graves will open and dead souls come forth to life.



## Germs of Thought.

### EMBLEMS OF SOUL WORK.

#### Subject: SOUL ADJUDICATION.

"Judge righteous judgment."—John vii. 24.

**A**DJUDICATION is one of the many avocations of civilized man. There are Commercial adjudicators. In almost all departments of action where men ply their energies for a liveli-

hood, there are those who are recognised as authorities ; men whose judgment upon the value of commodities, properties and productions are accepted and acted upon. There are Literary adjudicators ; men who for the most part constitute themselves as authorities in all literary productions. In their various journals they arraign our authors at their tribunal, examine their works, and pronounce upon their excellencies or defects. Although it comes not within my purpose to discuss the value of such functionaries or to criticise the way in which their duties are generally discharged, I cannot but express my profound regret that so many of them are utterly disqualified for the position they have assumed. There are Legal adjudicators : men who preside in our courts of justice, who sift evidence, balance probabilities and always in the name, if not always under the sense of justice, pronounce upon the merits of the case before them. There are Theological adjudicators : men who profess to know the whole truth of God, pronounce in judgment upon the religious opinions of their fellow-men, and at whose feet sit weak-minded religionists who accept their dictates and call them Rabbis. The true, the honest, and independent searchers after the truth repudiate their authority and denounce their arrogant and impious assumptions.

Whilst, however, there is a great deal of adjudication going on in the commercial, the legal, the literary and the theological departments of human life, there is an adjudication which transcends all others in importance, and which devolves not upon any particular class of men, but upon each man as the most urgent obligation of life. I mean the adjudication of those subjects which are vitally connected with our spiritual and immortal interests ; subjects concerning which each must form his own estimate, and where the judgment of one can never become the substitute for that of another ; subjects concerning which Heaven commands us to "judge righteous judgment," to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good. What are those subjects ? I shall mention only a few of the most important, and they may be comprehended under four general heads :—Man, Christianity, Religion, and Providence.

I. **MAN.** It is of paramount importance that men should form a "righteous judgment" of themselves. "To know thy-

self" is at once the condition and guarantee of all true knowledge.

"By all means use sometimes to be alone ;  
    Salute thyself—see what thy soul doth wear ;  
Dare to look in thy chest, for 'tis thine own,  
    And tumble up and down what thou find'st there."

WORDSWORTH.

What is a "righteous judgment" of man's *nature*? What is man? Widely different estimates are given and circulated. The thoughtless millions *practically* declare that he is corporeity and nothing more; that the body with its limbs, appetites, organs, sensations, constitute the entirety of his being. Hence for mere animalism they live. Their grand question is, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" The sciential materialists agree in this. They say, "The body is everything—man is nothing more than organized matter. Dust and nothing else. All are of the dust, and all return to dust again." Here then is a subject of which it becomes every man to form a true estimate. For myself, my judgment is formed, my philosophy, such as it is, and my Bible, as I interpret it, assure me that man is a *spirit*, that the body is no more him than the house is the tenant—the telescope the astronomer—the lyrist the harp. When I say spirit, I mean *responsible* spirit. There may be spirits existing that having neither the attributes nor the sense of accountability. Such is not man; he is not an engine, moved hither and hither by the force of another; a mere spoke in the wheel of the universe, a mere log of wood tossed about on the black surging sea of destiny. He is a responsible agent, self-moving, self-directing. I have no debate upon the point; my reasonings, my consciousness and my Bible have placed the question beyond the pale of discussion long, long ago. I *feel* that I am free. The sense of responsibility permeates my nature, throbs in every pang of remorse and in every thrill of self-approval.

What is "a righteous judgment" of man's *mission*? Wherefore is man here? Wherefore sent into this world? Is there a purpose in his creation? If so, what? The voluntary says, "I am here to gratify my senses;" the worldling, "I am here to amass wealth;" the intellectualist, "I am here to struggle after the philosophy of things." But are these righteous judgments? I trow not.

They outrage reason, they clash with conscience, they contradict the teachings of the Holy Book. Brothers, it seems to me that we are here in order that by searching after truth and struggling after holiness we may form a character that will qualify us for the fellowship and the service of God through all the ages that await us.

What is a "righteous judgment" concerning man's *chief needs*? What are the primary necessities of man? Men have come to call food and raiment with emphasis "the necessities of life." But are they so? Cannot man live without them? Does he not so exist in the other world? To me the chief needs of man appear to be forgiveness of sin, purity of heart, moral nobility and harmony with the universe, an unbroken peace with Heaven.

Form then a true estimate of *man*. You can never exaggerate his importance. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" *The world is great*. All men, though for very different reasons, are impressed with its greatness. It is great to the poet, whose imagination glows in the presence of its scenes of enchanting beauty and aspects of stirring grandeur. It is great to the philosopher, who in every step of his research is amazed with the subtlety of its elements, the regularity of its operations, the fitness of its means to its ends, and the boundless variety of its combinations and its life. It is great to the Christian, who feels its moral significance, regards it as vocal with the thoughts, overflowing with the goodness, filled with the presence, and radiant with the majesty of the Great Father of all. It is *great* even to the miserable worldling. He navigates its oceans, traverses its shores, cultivates its soil, and works its mines, in order to appropriate to himself its treasures. But great as the world is the soul is greater. The world cannot think of its Creator; the soul can. The world cannot act contrary to the will of its Creator; the soul can. The world will not exist for ever; the soul will. As a leaf this planet shall fall from the forest of existence, as a passing cloud it shall melt into thin air. But the soul has an imperishable existence. Who can tell the value of a soul? Think of its capabilities. Recall the wonders it has achieved, and is still achieving. Think of the influence which it exerts! One soul can pour into an age a flood of sentiment that shall beat through the heart of centuries. That one act of Adam vibrates in all hearts to-day. Think of

what has been given to the redemption of a soul! "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things that are silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."

Another subject on which we should "judge righteous judgment" is—

**II. CHRISTIANITY.** The great God has submitted the Gospel to our judgment. What is it? This is a vital question—vital to every man. Sadly diversified and even contradictory are the estimates that men have given of the Gospel. Some pronounce it a "cunningly devised fable;" a story which, with some amount of historic foundation, was wrought out of the imaginations of the wily and superstitious of past times.

This is simply absurd. Its *incongruity* with the popular ideas, spirit, and character of the age and country from which it sprung and its *congruity* with itself, with our *à priori* ideas of the Divine character, and, with the common intuitions and exigencies of human nature, expose the atrocious preposterousness of such a view. Besides, could a fable have done what the Gospel has achieved? Could it create a Christendom, with its civilization, its freedom, morality, and religion? Could it command the homage and the advocacy of the greatest thinkers, authors and sages of all times? If the Gospel is a fable, all things are fabulous, and we live in dreams. Others say that the Gospel is nothing more than a wonderful history. It is indeed a wonderful history. The advent of Christ to this world—His teachings, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, are the grandest and most influential facts that ever occurred in the annals of our race. But the Gospel is more than a history. The history is but its form and manifestation. There is something underlying the facts, producing the facts, throbbing the facts: that something is the essence and heart of the Gospel. What is that something? We shall see as we advance. Some say it is a system of theology. But a Theology is man's productions; the thoughts of poor erring men systematized, nothing more. Our conception of the Gospel is not the Gospel itself. The Gospel is as independent of our theology as the stellar universe is independent of astronomic theories. What then, is the Gospel? A revelation of God's love to sinners. Here is its essence: "God so loved the world."

You can never over-value this Gospel. It is the *essential means of spiritual life*. It generates and supports spiritual life in the soul. It is the bread that came down from heaven. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The Gospel is to the soul what light and air, food and water, are to the body—that without which there can be no life or growth. The loss of the Gospel as I regard it would be a greater loss to humanity than if you were to quench all the lights of the firmament and leave the heavens in sackcloth, or seal up the clouds so that the fertilizing showers shall no more visit the earth.

Another subject on which man should "judge righteous judgment" is—

III. RELIGION. What is religion? Some "judge" it to be a Creed. I have no words to express the high importance I attach to a well-digested system of truth; but a creed, however scriptural, is not religion; devils have orthodox creeds. What is religion? Some "judge" it to be a ritual. I share not the spirit of those who, with the exclusiveness of the bigot and the ignorance of the unthoughtful, indiscriminately denounce all ceremonies in connection with religion. I like the æsthetic in form, the harmonious in song, the graceful in gesture, and the sublime in expression. But this is not religion. When the ritual is the expression of a divine thing it is beautiful, useful, and good. When it is *form*, and nothing more, it is utterly worthless. What, then, is religion? It is the spirit of Christ in the man. "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ he is none of His." His spirit is the spirit of true freedom, incorruptible honesty, self-sacrificing philanthropy, and adoring worship. This is religion, and nothing else. "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." You are perhaps ready to exclaim—What! is this all? Is the thing about which a million books have been written, and ten thousand sermons preached every Sunday, nothing more than this Christ-like spirit? It is reported of a man who, on seeing the sea for the first time exclaimed, "What, is this all? Is this the mighty ocean?" It was all that he saw of the ocean; but if he could

only launch out upon the piece of water he saw, trust himself to it, sail over its billows, it would take him round the world. It is so with this religious spirit. It may appear small to your vision, but it extends to everything that is sacred in the universe ; it reaches the throne of God. Trust yourself to it ; sail forth on its tidal wave and it will bear you to the calm and sunny shores of eternity.

Another subject on which you are called upon to "judge righteous judgment" is—

IV. PROVIDENCE.—By providence, here, I mean that ever-changing world of external circumstances in which we live, and move and have our being. Circumstances are *vital* things to man ; they not only affect his senses, but stir his deepest soul. How do you estimate them ? There are different estimates current and advocated. Some regard them as fortuitous occurrences ; others, as divinely ordered. The former declare "that all things come alike to all ;" that the events of life, like the billows of ocean, break on all shores alike. The latter consider that they are all divinely directed, and come with the divine purpose. Some regard circumstances as their masters : others, as their servants. The former bow to them, and ascribe to them their condition and their character, the latter use them as the horseman his steed, the mariner the winds, the telegraphist the lightning—to carry out their purposes, and to do their work. Some regard them as beneficial only as they tend to the gratification of the body and the amassment of wealth ; others, as beneficial in proportion as they serve to discipline the character, to spiritualise the affections, and to lead the soul to God. All souls make their own apprissment of circumstances. Which estimate is yours ? Do you consider circumstances as coming by chance, or as ordered by God ? My view is the latter. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground unnoticed by the great Father. Do you regard them as tyrants, or as slaves ? Are you groaning under them, or are you battling with them, and making them subserve your spiritual good ? Do you regard them as serviceable only when they promote your temporal interest ? or as blessings, however painful, if they tend to school you into virtue and to religion ? The latter is the right idea. The worldly

man, in taking stock, estimates the year as profitable only as it has served to augment his wealth. He will say, "It has been a good year," if he has prospered; and a "bad one," if his worldly resources have not increased. But this is not a "righteous judgment." That is really the good year that has deepened your sense of the spiritual, strengthened your confidence in God, and invigorated your sympathies with the spiritual, the righteous, and the Christ-like. The year that has wrecked your fortune, robbed you of your health, bereaved you of your friends—if it has led you into closer fellowship with the Infinite, has been a good year. Thus Paul felt: "What things were gain to me," 'my learning, my social status, my worldly prospects, "I counted loss for Christ."

**CONCLUSION.**—You see how much the soul has to do in the great work of apprisedment. It has to form a true estimate of *man*, of the *Gospel*, of *religion*, and of *circumstances*. False estimates prevail concerning all these, and false estimates are ever dangerous. "Judge righteous judgment" brothers. You have a judiciary function to fulfil in life. No man in ermine requires more scrutinizing thought, more gravity of spirit, than you. The Great God is submitting every day questions for your decision which are of paramount moment. As one single figure wrong amongst a million in arithmetical sums will vitiate all the calculations, and give a wrong result, so one mistake upon these vital points may involve you in a terrible calamity.

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#### REASON.

"Reason is the glory of human nature. He is next to the gods whom reason and not passion impels."—*Claudian*. "The voice of reason is more to be regarded than the bent of any inclination. Inclination must ultimately bow to reason."—*Addison*. "When a man has not a good reason for doing a thing, he has one for letting it alone."—*Sir Walter Scott*. "He who will not reason is a bigot, and he who cannot is a fool, and he who dares not is a slave."—*Byron*.

## THE FOREIGN PULPIT.

## Subject: THE LOVE OF JESUS TO HIS OWN.

"Now, before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."—John xiii. 1.

THE purpose of these words is clear: to glorify the love of Jesus Christ, and to unfold its glory before us. It is quite true that the picture is altogether out of proportion to the frame in which it is set, but, nevertheless, this purpose is not obscured thereby. For though these words testify expressly only to the love of Jesus to *His own*, and purposely withdraw our thoughts from his mercy to those who are far away and estranged from Him and are His enemies, yet the very restriction of our view is an advantage; for, while we do not see the length and breadth of His love, we are recompensed by the clearer view of its height and depth.

Nor have we any reason for yielding to sorrow as the sound of these words falls on our ears; for if anyone were to interpret them to mean that the love which lasted *unto* the end would cease *at* the end, that, accordingly, its clear light would sink in the darkness of death, he would miss the real meaning of the words as it lies beneath the somewhat illusive form. Love does not die; it lives; it never ceases: this holds in the highest measure of the loved of Jesus. He loved His own unto the end, and when this end came, it was really nothing else than a new beginning. The corresponding parable is not this, that the stream at the moment of mightiest effusion is suddenly hemmed in and closed; but, this, that the stream flows on and away into the eternal life. So regarded, these words are full of encouragement and help.

THE END OF THE LOVE OF JESUS IS THE GUARANTEE OF ITS VASTNESS AND INFINITE.—For what was this end? It was the highest point in the unfolding of His love on earth: it was the reason of its display for ever.

I. THE HIGHEST POINT IN ITS EARTHLY DEVELOPMENT.— “Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end.” The meaning these words carry on their surface is sufficient to place the Lord outside all circles in which our experience moves. He says of *His* love that it has flowed in an unchecked and undiminished stream from the beginning to the end. This is *not* the rule among *us*: the flow of human love is very intermittent. It is as though the supply would be exhausted, as though the vessel would lack oil. We are able to understand this phenomenon. Its root is to be sought on the one side in the experiences with which love meets. The ingratitude with which it is recompensed, the selfishness with which it meets which is only concerned to profit by it, the misunderstanding and the rebuffs to which it is exposed—these are sufficient to hem in even the stream of love itself and to make the leaping waters creep slowly and with intermission. On the other hand there is a reason for this in the anticipation of the approaching end. When the desire for society yields to the desire to be alone; when interest in the temporal yields to thought about the eternal; when activity yields to the call and need of rest; when, in a word, the rapid ebb and flow of vital energy is yielding to stagnation, love receives a blow and pays the penalty which follows from the connection between mind and nature. There is only one regarding whom neither of these things is true, and that One—Jesus. *He* loved His own unto the end. His love was not hindered by the mode in which they received it; and though one of them was a devil, and though the best of them severely taxed His patience and gentleness, His love held on and held out, needing no sustenance from without except that supplied by their need of it. And now He not merely saw the end approaching, He was already anticipating the heavy sorrow of the baptism which was at hand; nevertheless, love abides, its eye unclouded, its hand and mouth unclosed. Indeed the approaching death does touch even His love, but how? It does not sink but rises as with a new impulse. Of this explanation the words apparently admit. They not simply show us Jesus in a higher form than the human has ever assumed, but they also point us to the Divine in Him.

Again: “When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world, He loved His own unto the end.” The meaning of these words is not this, that notwithstanding His

approaching death His love held out, but that the near approach of His departure was the *reason* and *motive* leading to a higher and a fresh manifestation of love. He *had* loved His own in virtue of His participation with them, now His lips are open to disclose to them what He had hitherto held from them. He *had* loved them in all that He had done with a view to purify them—His reproofs, instructions, and discipline of them—He now begins the last and most important of all His attempts to purify them by washing the feet of each one of them. He *had* loved them in that He had united them in a brotherhood such as the world had never seen before, now He would finish the building, would complete the fellowship by causing them to partake of the ordained festival of love, all eating of one bread and drinking of one cup. His was in reality a rising, increasing love. Yes, it grew more strong, it rose more quickly at the very moment when it entered the shadow of death. His dying lips breathed forth love; His outstretched hands distributed love. And, when at length, He gave up the ghost, did His love, too, sink into the night? No. He loved His own unto the end, unto His last cry and breath; but the meaning of this is not that He still loved them though He was dying, but that this very death was an act of love: He loved them *through* His dying, for He died *for* them. Since He could no longer love them just as He did when alive with them, He constituted His death a work of love. This is the love of Jesus unto the end. And yet it had now simply come to the end of its earthly unfolding. Now see how—

**II. THE POINT THUS REACHED BECOMES THE BEGINNING OF AN ETERNAL UNFOLDING.**—“Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father.” Lay the emphasis on *unto the Father*. Before the Father, to whom He was going, He would vindicate what He had done on earth, and would receive of His Father power that He might vindicate. The love which was faithful unto death now sits upon the throne, and has all power in heaven and on earth. Jesus is now able to do all that love is called to do, and all that His own may need. And what do they need? “He loved his own which were in the world.” Lay the emphasis on “*in the world*.” These words reveal the reason of their need. In the world they have tribulation, not simply that arising from persecution and sorrow,

but that arising from a more dangerous cause ; they need to be kept from the evil. And where is their protection ? In Him alone who, through the suffering of death, is crowned with glory and honour ; to whom pertains the word, “No man can pluck my sheep out of my hand, no man can pluck them out of my Father’s hand, for I and my Father are one.” The love unto the end was the reason of its manifestation for ever.

Again : Who is certain of receiving this manifestation, in whom will Jesus glorify the power he has received ? “Having loved His own He loved them unto the end.” Throw the emphasis this time on *His own*. In what sense are they His, and how have they become so ?

First : The Father has given them to Him. And because He had received them as a gift out of His Father’s hand, of which an account had to be rendered, therefore were they dear to Him—therefore did He love them unto the end.

Secondly : The expression includes another meaning. Since Jesus had loved those whom the Father gave Him unto the end, He had acquired them for Himself through the value of His precious blood. They had become His in this way, those whom He had loved with such surpassing and inexpressible love, purchasing them to Himself by His sacrifice—this has become the reason of the manifestation of His love to them for ever.

And who, finally, are those whom He calls his own ? Not simply the twelve, for “neither pray I for those alone, but for all who shall believe on me through their word.” All who unite in the exclamation, “We know and have believed the love which He hath toward us,” are the objects of this love. So that our text is a shield for us, under its protection we may trust. But, at the same time, there is a goad in it ; for, on the other hand, we have to hold fast our love to the end—love generally, but especially love to Him who first loved us.

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*Professor of Theology in Berlin.*  
 By R. VAUCHAN PRYCE, M.A., LL.B.

*Subject: THE AGES.*

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—1 Cor. x. 11—13.

**F**ROM this passage several things may be inferred concerning the ages of human history.

I. The **MORAL RELATIONSHIP** of the Ages. Paul teaches here that the age of the Jew in the wilderness sustained a twofold relation to men of all future times. The relation of a representative, and of an admonisher.

First: It was a *representative*. Things that happened in the wilderness happened as "ensamples." (1.) Their blessings were "ensamples." Their "pillar" represented the Bible. Their baptism unto Moses represented the dedications of Christians to the religion of Christ. Their manna and their water from the rock represented Christ—the bread and water of spiritual life. (2.) Their imperfections were "ensamples." Their lusts, idolatries, frivolity, discontent, represent the sins to which men are liable through all Christian times. (3.) Their punishments were "ensamples." Thousands died in the wilderness in consequence of their sins, and this represents the fact that sin and misery are indissolubly connected.

Secondly: It was an *admonisher*. "They are written for our admonition." The principles embodied in their history are of universal application. They are—(1.) The special care which God exercises over those who commit themselves to Him. (2.) The tendency of the depraved heart to go wrong. (3.) The inviolable connection between sin and suffering.

From this passage may be inferred—

II. **THE DIVINE SUPERINTENDENCE** of the Ages. It is here taught that God employs one age as a minister to another. He is in all ages. He makes the events that happened to the Jews in the wilderness thousands of years ago minister to the good of men of all future times.

First: This fact should restrain us from hasty judgments of

His providence. Secondly: Should impress with the seriousness of life.

From this passage may be inferred—

III. The GROWING RESPONSIBILITY of the Ages. “Upon whom the ends of the world are come.” The Patriarchal was succeeded by the Mosaic, the Mosaic by the Christian. The Christian is the last. All the past has come down to us.

First: Through literature. Books bring down to us the poets, the sages, the orators, the preachers of past ages, &c.

Secondly: Through tradition. Were there no books one generation would impart its thoughts, spirit, art, institutions to another.\*

From this passage may be inferred—

IV. The COMMON TEMPTATION of the Ages. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,” &c. Men through all times have been subject to similar temptations.

(1.) All men are *temptable*. (a.) Men are *constitutionally* temptable. All moral creatures in the universe are temptable, even the highest angel. There is no virtue where there is no temptability. God alone is untemptable. (b.) All men as fallen creatures are *specially temptable*. Having yielded to temptation by the law of habit they have gained a tendency to do this and this tendency is ever on the increase. (2.) All men are in *tempting circumstances*. In heaven there may be no incentives to wrong, no seductive influences. Earth is full of the tempting.

The passage here teaches two things—

First: *That our temptations require great caution.* “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” The Jews in the wilderness had great privileges. Inspired men were with them. Supernatural manifestations surrounded them; God himself was specially with them. Yet they yielded to their temptations and they fell. Wherefore let all “take heed.” Privileges are no security.

Secondly: *That our temptations must be resisted.* They are *resistable*. (1.) Because God does not allow any temptation to happen to us that outmeasures our power of resistance. “He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.” He is

\* All these points will be found more fully elaborated in *HOMILIST*, vol. vii., first series, p. 188.

in all the events of life. He proportions the burden to the back. If temptations came outstripping our capabilities of resistance, our yielding to them might be a calamity but would not be a crime. Such a case, I presume, never happens in the history of man. The righteous God would not allow it to transpire. (2.) Because if we are earnest in our resistance, He will enable us to escape. He "will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it." "There is no valley so dark," says an old expositor, "but He can find a way through it, no affliction so grievous but He can prevent or remove, or enable us to support it, and, in the end, overrule it to our advantage."

CONCLUSION.—First: Do not suppose that the advantages of past times were greater than ours. There are men who are constantly referring us to the past, saying the former times were better than the present. Of all the ages that are past, what age had the advantages of this? Not the patriarchal: for under it the Deluge came. Not the Mosaic; for under it came the ruin of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish Commonwealth. Not the Apostolic; for in it grievous heresies arose, and moral abominations grew rife. Secondly: Do not suppose that the type of excellence reached by our ancestors is high enough for us. We ought to be more noble than the old patriarchs, more enlightened and Christ-like than the best Christians of Apostolic times.



## *The Pith of Renowned Sermons.*

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ROBERT SOUTH, D.D.

*Subject: MAN MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.*

"So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him."—Gen. i. 27.

**H**OW hard it is for natural reason to discover a creation before revealed, or, being revealed, to believe it, the strange opinions of the old philosophers, *e.g.*, Epicurus and Aristotle, and the infidelity of modern Atheists, is too sad a demonstration. Modern inquiry seems unable to run the world

back to its first infancy, and to view nature in its cradle. Still it is as rational to conceive an Almighty Power producing a thing out of nothing, as to conceive that the world had no beginning, which conception is attended with no small train of absurdities. In this chapter we have God surveying the works of the creation. What Omnipotence wrought we have an Omnipotence to approve. Moreover, we have God giving His last stroke, and summing up all into man ; so that, whereas in other creatures we have but the trace of His footsteps, in man we have the draught of His hand. We might well imagine that the Great Artificer would be more than ordinarily exact in drawing His own picture. These remarks lead us to inquire, concerning our text, what this image of God in man is, and wherein it doth consist ? This I shall do in two ways.

I. NEGATIVELY. Let us see wherein the image of God in man does NOT consist. Some, for instance the Socinians, maintain that it consists in that *power and dominion that God gave Adam over the creatures*. True, man was vouch'd God's immediate deputy upon earth, the viceroy of the creation and lord-lieutenant of the world. But that this power and dominion is not adequately and completely the image of God is clear from two considerations :

First. Then *He that had most power and dominion would have most of God's image*, and consequently Nimrod had more of it than Noah, Saul than Samuel, the persecutors than the martyrs, Cæsar than Christ himself, which is a blasphemous paradox. If the image of God in man consisted mainly in power and dominion,

Then, Secondly : *Self-denial and humility will make us unlike God*. This is contrary to the whole teaching of the Gospel.

Since we have seen what this image of God in man is not, let us show—

II. POSITIVELY. Let us see wherein the image of God in man **DOES** consist. It is that universal rectitude of all the faculties of the soul, by which they stand, act, and dispose their respective offices and operations, which will be more fully set forth by taking a distinct survey of it in the several faculties belonging to the soul ; in the understanding, in the will, in the passions or affections.

First : *In the understanding.* At its first creation it was sublime, clear, and inspiring. It was the leading, controlling faculty. It gave the soul a bright and full view into all things, and was not only a window, but itself the prospect. There is as much difference between the clear representations of the understanding then, and the obscure discoveries that it makes now, as there is between the prospect of landscape from a casement and from a keyhole. As there are two great functions of the soul—contemplation and practice—so with relation to the objects of each of these, the understanding is divided into speculative and practical, in both of which the image of God was then apparent. That image *was* apparent—

(a.) *In the understanding speculative.* There are some general maxims and universal notions in the mind of man which are the rules of discourse and the basis of all philosophy. Now, it was Adam's happiness in the state of innocence to have these clear and unsullied. He came into the world a philosopher, which sufficiently appeared by his writing the nature of things upon their names. Like a better Archimedes, the issue of all his inquiries was a *Eureka*, the offspring of his brain without the sweat of his brow. All the arts, rarities, and inventions are but the relics of an intellect defaced with sin and time. An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the rudiments of Paradise. The image of God was apparent at man's creation—

(β.) *In the practical understanding.* That is the storehouse of the soul, in which are treasured up the rules of action and the seeds of morality. It was the privilege of Adam, innocent, to have these notions firm and untainted, to carry his monitor in his bosom, his law in his heart ; to have such a conscience as might be its own casuist. The decalogue of Moses was but a transcript, not an original. God's image in man at the creation was stamped—

Secondly : *In the will.* The will of man in the state of innocence had an entire freedom to accept or not to accept the temptation. The will then was ductile and pliant to all the motions of right reason. The understanding and the will never disagreed, for the proposals of the one never thwarted the inclinations of the other. It is the nature of the will to follow a superior guide—to be drawn by the intellect. But then it

was drawn as a triumphant chariot, which at the same time both follows and triumphs ; while it obeyed this, it commanded the other faculties. It was subordinate, not enslaved to the understanding ; not as a servant to a master, but as a queen to her king, who both acknowledges her subjection and yet retains a majesty. God's image in man at the creation was to be seen—

Thirdly : *In the passions.* This will be evident if we consider the principal and most noted passions from which we may take an estimate of the rest.

(α.) *Love.* This is the great instrument and engine of nature, the bond and cement of society, the spirit and spring of the universe. Love is such an affection as cannot so properly be said to be in the soul, as the soul to be in it. The soul may sooner leave off to subsist than to love, and, like the vine, it withers and dies if it has nothing to embrace. Now, this affection, in the state of innocence, was happily pitched upon its right object, it flamed up in direct fervours of devotion to God, and in collateral emissions of charity to its neighbour. It was a vestal and a virgin fire, and differed as much from that which usually passes by this name now-a-days, as the vital heat from the burning of a fever.

(β.) *Hatred.* This is the passion of defiance, and there is hostility included in its very essence. But then it acted within the compass of its proper object—like aloes, bitter, but wholesome.

(λ.) *Anger.* This then vented itself by the measures of reason. It sparkled like a coal upon the altar with the fervours of piety, the heats of devotion, the sallies and vibrations of a harmless activity.

(δ.) *Joy.* This was not the mere crackling of thorns or sudden blaze of the spirits, the exultation of a tickled fancy or a pleased appetite. Joy then was the recreation of the judgment, the jubilee of reason. It filled the soul, as God does the universe, silently and without noise.

(θ.) *Sorrow.* Had any loss or disaster made but room for grief, it would have moved according to the allowances of prudence and the proportions of the provocation. Sorrow then would have been as silent as thought, as severe as philosophy.

(τ.) *Hope.* There may not have been hope in respect of any

future addition, but only of the continuance of what was already possessed. It is not imaginable that Adam could fix upon such poor, thin enjoyments as riches, pleasures, the gaieties of an animal life. For if as the apostle says, "no man hopes for that which he sees," much less could Adam then hope for such things as he saw through.

(ε.) *Fear.* It was then the instrument of caution, not of anxiety. It fixed upon Him who only is to be feared, God. It was awe without amazement, dread without distraction. There was a beauty even in this very paleness ; it was the colour of devotion.

From this exact and regular composure of all the faculties there arose the crowning perfection of all, a *good conscience*, which arises from the right action of all the faculties of the soul, just as health does from the right action of all the faculties of the body.

Now the use of this point—that man was created in the image of God—might be various ; but at present it shall only be twofold.

First : *To remind us of the irreparable loss we have sustained by sin.* Briefly, so great is the change, so deplorable the degradation of our nature, that whereas before we bore the image of God, we now retain only the image of man. Our subject serves—

Secondly : *To teach us the excellency of the Christian religion.* It is the great and only means to set fallen man upon his legs again, to clarify his reason, to rectify his will, and to compose and regulate his affections. The whole business of our redemption is, in short, only to rub over the defaced copy of the creation, to reprint God's image upon the soul, and, as it were, to set forth nature in a second and fairer edition.

*Bristol.*

URIAH R. THOMAS.



# The Preacher's Dissecting Room.

"I SPEAK AS TO WISE MEN."

HENRY PARR LIDDON, M.A.

**A**E resume our notice of Mr Liddon's sermon on "The Power of Christ's Resurrection;" discussing in this article the second and last part, in which he undertakes to consider the "moral" and "spiritual power" of that cardinal fact. And by a moral power he means, so he tells us, "a power which shall stimulate and control feeling, resolution, action." Starting from which definition, he proceeds to consider, what are the conditions of efficiency in a power of this kind, and how far they appear satisfied in the instance before him.

The above plan is carried out somewhat in the following way:—A moral power to be effective must enable us to do and endure, partly because human life consists of necessity in doing and suffering for some end; and, still more, because the Christian life consists in this doing, and suffering, not of necessity only, but on principle. As with "a soldier, an artist, a statesman," so with a Christian in this respect, he needs a "plan of campaign," an "ideal," a "future," which shall at once incite and support him to do and endure: some object of hope on the one hand, and some ground of hope on the other.

Admitting this, these "conditions" will be found "satisfied by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ" on "a magnificent scale." This is the next point to be proved.

And, first, as to the "object of hope," the Resurrection "opens out before the eye of the soul its one adequate aim in all action, and in all endurance—a union of the whole man with God, extending through the vast perspectives of a boundless eternity." This is shown, negatively, by considering that even the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the only other thing apparently able to supply this "adequate aim," is really unequal to it on the following grounds, viz. (1), because the metaphysical and moral arguments in support of it are very difficult for ordinary minds to apprehend; (2), because these arguments are complicated by scientific considerations which rather go to prove the immortality of the body as well; and (3), because in times of sorrow (when we especially need support) we cannot help listening to imagination and feeling rather than to arguments, however true or profound. What we require, therefore—so it is next argued on the

positive side—is “something which shall meet the senses and imagination on their own ground by visibly reversing that spectacle of death which so painfully depresses them.” And this “something was supplied on the early morning of Easter Day,” as shown, *e. g.*, by the peculiar glory of the Resurrection itself which is briefly but most beautifully described; by its peculiar significance as a manifest conquest over the great conqueror, death; by its direct and necessary connection in Scripture with every Christian’s personal hope of resurrection and immortality; and by the peculiar and amazing energy of such a hope in the heart. “On such a subject as this sincere belief is a tremendous power; it is a power which can invigorate will, and purify affection, and check the fire of passion, and quicken into life the languor of despair.” Altogether, the Resurrection of Christ supplies us to perfection in this manner with the kind of “hope” we require.

From the preceding abridged sketch of what is in reality only an abridged argument itself, the reader will obtain, nevertheless, some idea of its power. The question, indeed, is handled with great boldness, directness, fairness, and faith; and the impression (so important to successful preaching) is left on the mind, that the preacher sees and faces the difficulties, and yet feels the truth, of his point. We believe, as we listen, that he believes fully—fully, and also deliberately—in the Resurrection as a “hope.” And we cannot but acknowledge, further, that he has rendered most weighty reasons for his faith. The preacher who has done thus much has done uncommonly well.

At the same time, we submit, with all deference, that he has missed his mark on one point; and left this part of his subject decidedly incomplete—complete, we almost think, to the extent of one-half. In other words, we consider, that, admirable as is his summing up of the intimate and inseparable connection between the Resurrection of Christ and the Christian hope when regarded objectively, he has not been equally successful as to the subjective view of this hope. For he has omitted, it will be found, to mention—and it would almost seem even to recollect—that such a future life as that which Revelation holds out to us is not a thing of desire to human nature, as human nature is when confronted with the fact of Christ’s Resurrection, but a thing of fear and dislike. No one wishes by nature for such an immortality as that which can alone be entered upon through the open gates of Christ’s grave. “The riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints” are no riches at all to an unsanctified man. The only effect, therefore, of presenting such a hope by itself to such a nature, is like that of presenting a magnet to the wrong end of a needle; instead of attracting, it

repels. The Resurrection would profit us very little if that were all that it did. What is wanted in addition, and what is also effected, we believe, by this Resurrection of Jesus Christ when employed by a hand from above—is something which shall change the direction of the desires and the affections, and shall enable a man to see the beauty as well as the reality of the hope. This is, perhaps, of all illustrations of the “power” of that Resurrection, the most wonderful and the deepest—this proof of its power on the heart, of its power to burst asunder the bands of spiritual death, and to call forth a kind of echo and image of itself in the resurrection of man’s spirit. We should be glad, indeed, to hear Mr. Liddon dilate, in his noble way, on this truth ; and reverently endeavour to trace out, so far as man may, how the rising again of Him who was dead, and who died for our sins, but is now alive for evermore, not only reveals to us and prepares for us a blessed hope after death, but also creates and enkindles a fervent love of it in our hearts.

Of course it can be urged, in reply, that it is not possible, from the nature of the case, to attend to every side of the subject which is under discussion in a sermon. But the rejoinder is obvious. No subject ought to be chosen of such a magnitude that any important part of it has to be passed over without mention. In the present instance the gifted writer has set himself to speak of the effect of the Resurrection on “the moral and spiritual life” of the Christian. On one-half of one division of this subject—if our judgment is correct—he has said scarcely a word. In the rush and fervour of his oratorical charge against one-half of the position, he has left the other unassailed. It is not for us who calmly look on from a position of safety to be severe on his error ; but we shall do well to observe it. *Aliquando bonus dormilat Homerus.*

We shall do well to observe it, too, on this ground, that a second very similar error almost immediately follows. All the next part of this division of the subject, up to the somewhat scanty and fragmentary conclusion, was necessarily omitted (so we find from a footnote) when the sermon was delivered, although described in the same note as being essential to the plan of the sermon. But does not this amount to a virtual confession that the plan of the sermon was not a good one ? Why should the preacher’s scheme comprise more than he has time to deliver ? Why should he embrace so large an armful that he cannot lift it all from the ground ? The main source of the whole mischief lies in the original vicious selection. If the laborer had narrowed his field of operation more judiciously, and fenced it in more carefully, he would have cultivated it to more profit.

If he had attempted less, in a word, he would have done the more. Such is the conviction we arrive at on this brilliant sermon as a whole. On how many thousands of dull sermons the same epitaph might be inscribed! In the present case, however, it is no epitaph, for there is a living sermon beneath it—a discourse which, if it does nothing else it leaves on the mind of the reader an abiding impression of the force and breadth and depth of the Scripture at its head. Would that all sermons did the same!

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## Biblical Criticism.

“*Kai τοῦτο ποιησομεν, ἐάνπερ ἐπιτρέπῃ ὁ Θεός.*”—Heb. vi. 3.

(Continued from p. 49.)

THE precise reference of *γάρ* has been disputed. It seems most natural to make it point to the leading statement of the preceding sentence, that is, either to *τοῦτο ποιήσομεν*, or, which is the same thing, to *ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα*: “Let us, for,” &c. Delitzsch, however, argues that it must be viewed as looking to *ἐάνπερ ἐπιτρέπῃ ὁ Θεός*, which first suggests the idea of a barrier or limit to be more fully exhibited, which it is the object of the following verses to illustrate. This reference is very liable to be misunderstood. According to this connection, the meaning is not, as might be supposed: For if God do not permit, then it is impossible to renew men. Such a view would rob the passage of all that is peculiar to it; for it is equally true in every case, that without God's help nothing can be done. The mediating thought is: God may not permit. There are cases where the Spirit is withheld, and in these renewal is impossible. This view of the reference of *γάρ* does not differ materially from that which makes it point directly to *φερώμεθα*.

Delitzsch also argues, that the active voice *ἀνακαινίζειν* which must be viewed as describing what a Christian teacher makes it his object to accomplish, supplies an argument in favor of the idea that the preceding verses are designed as an exhibition of the apostle's purpose. There is some force in this consideration. But in so far as it has force, it is obvious that it

obliges us to think of a design very different from that of merely indicating the course of an argument. The design suggested must be that of stimulating the Hebrews, and helping them forward ; and certainly there is nothing unnatural in the idea that this may be included in the words as well as admonition : Let us press on, you striving to grow in all that is good, whilst I put forth every effort to help you. But still admonition must be viewed as the main staple of the first three verses.

In the early church this passage led some to doubt the authority of the epistle altogether ; and it was viewed by others as warranting extreme strictness of ecclesiastical discipline. The Montanists and Novatians made it one of the foundations of their principle, that no lapsed persons, whatever might be the depth of their subsequent penitence, should ever be restored to the communion of the brethren. The general body of the church, with the view of depriving their opponents of the support of this passage, fell, after the fourth century, upon another method of expounding it, and understood it not as denying the possibility of repentance in any case, but as simply prohibiting the repetition of baptism. 'Ο θεῖος ἀπόστολος, says Theodoret, οὐ τὰ τῆς μετανοίας ἀπηγόρευνε φάρμακα, ἀλλὰ τοῦ θείου βαπτισμάτος τὸν ὄρον ἐδιδάξεν. Οὐχ ρίου τε οὐν ἡμᾶς πάλιν ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς τοῦ βαπτισμάτος δωρεᾶς. This interpretation seems to us exceedingly far-fetched and unnatural ; and yet the way was so gradually prepared for it by a change in the use and meaning of words, that it is not surprising it obtained currency. Even in Justin Martyr's time, *φωτισμός* had become a common name for baptism. Long ago, however, this interpretation has been abandoned. And it is now almost universally admitted, that the passage does speak of persons who are placed, even in the present life, beyond the possibility of repentance. There are great differences of opinion, however, as to the precise character of the persons referred to : whether they ever were truly regenerated—whether the nature of their fall can be accurately defined—and whether the sin here spoken of coincides with the sin against the Holy Ghost. The whole passage appeared so full of difficulty and perplexity to Luther, that he was led to question the full canonicity of the epistle, declaring that it seemed to him to contradict all the gospels, and also the epistles of Paul (Tholuck, 246, note).

Undoubtedly, the statement made in the passage before us is of a very solemn and awful character ; and it ought to awaken the most serious apprehensions in the breasts of those who are conscious that, though they have long known the Scriptures, they have yet lived in the practice of heinous sin. How near such persons may be to the dreadful gulf of confirmed impeni-

tence, God only knows; and they ought to cry mightily to Heaven for deliverance from so terrible a doom. It seems to be the doctrine of this passage, that we may place ourselves beyond the pale of pardon, even in the present life.

WILLIAM LINDSAY, D.D.



## *The Preacher's Finger-Post.*

### SPIRITUAL BLOOD-SHEDDING.

"And without shedding of blood is no remission."—Heb. ix. 22.

In this sentence the Apostle expresses the necessity of animal blood-shedding in the ceremonial cleansings of the Mosaic Dispensation. In the previous clause he says, "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood." "Almost," not all. The exceptions may be found in Exodus xix. 10; Lev. xv. 5, xvi. 26, xxii. 6. As a rule blood-shedding was indispensable for all ceremonial cleansing and consecration. Into the reason of this Biblical students have inquired, and have reached widely different results. From an inquiry into it here we are restricted both by our purpose and our space. Now, although the Apostle utters the text in order to express a fact in connection with a system which has long since passed away, we shall employ it to express the necessary condition of soul deliverance from sin. The shedding of blood means shedding of life.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood." It means, in other words, self-sacrifice. Christ says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you." What does He mean? He means this, unless you take my moral life into you—my self-sacrificing spirit—you cannot live.

I. This spiritual blood-shedding or self-sacrifice is essential to deliver OUR OWN SOULS FROM SIN. Sin is the great curse of humanity; deliverance from it is the great want. But there is no deliverance from it but by self-sacrificing efforts. No corrupt lust can be killed, no wicked habit overcome, no fettering chain snapped, no soul-tyrant crushed, without this blood-shedding. The shedding of blood involves two ideas. First: *The losing of life.* "The life is in the blood." Every drop falling is so much life gone. The life of the sinner is the life of carnality, worldliness, selfishness. Every self-denying act is the losing of this,

is the shedding of its blood, and the more of this blood-shedding the better for the soul. Bleed on, for he that loseth this sinful life shall find a higher. He that is crucified with Christ shall live. Secondly: *The feeling of pain.* The shedding of blood gives the idea of pain, and there is much pain connected with the efforts of the self-denying soul to deliver itself from sin. It is spoken of as an amputation, a mortification, a resisting unto blood, an agonizing, a crucifixion. But there is a high pleasure connected with the pain; heaven pours its joys into the soul as the carnal self is bleeding to death.

II. This spiritual blood-shedding or self-sacrifice is essential to deliver **THE SOULS OF OTHERS FROM SIN.** Three things show this. First: *The necessary qualification of a spiritual reformer.* The one instrument by which man can deliver the souls of his brother men from sin is the **GOSPEL.** But, to use the Gospel, he must (1) understand it, and he cannot understand it without a self-sacrificing spirit. To use it successfully he (2) must speak it with a living force, but he cannot do this without a self-sacrificing spirit. To use it with success (3) his labours must be blest of God, and God will not bless his labours without this self-sacrificing spirit. Secondly: *The spirit which has governed all genuine*

*reformers.* Moses was a reformer, and his life was a life of spiritual blood-shedding. "Blot my name out of the book," &c. Isaiah was a reformer, and when prostrate in the dust we hear him exclaim, "Here am I, send me." Jeremiah was a reformer, his public life was a life of blood-shedding. "O that my eyes were fountains of water," &c. Paul was a genuine reformer, and was not his life a life of self-sacrifice? "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh," &c. Thirdly: *The power of Christ in prosecuting His mission.* The grand object of Christ's mission to this world was to "destroy the works of the devil," to "put away sin." But what was the spirit in which He did His work? Self-sacrifice. "He loved us and gave Himself for us." He gave Himself, shed His own blood, for He knew that, "without shedding of blood there was no remission of sins." His self-sacrificing spirit in the Gospel is at once the power to redeem souls from sin and to reconcile souls to God. This is indeed the power of God unto salvation. Christ's self-sacrifice was in some respects *unique.* It was not to deliver His own soul from sin, for He had none, but the souls of others. His power is in His Cross.

**CONCLUSION.**—The text, then, has a universal applica-

tion. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." Deliverance from sin, the urgent necessity of humanity, is not an *easy* work. Every successful effort involves blood-shedding. All efforts apart from self-denial must prove utterly and forever fruitless. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." Brothers, embody this principle in your every effort, and ring this thought into the souls of men.

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#### CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANITY.

"But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid!"—Gal. ii. 17.

THE text is Paul's answer to an objection which he anticipated to the position which he had previously laid down, viz., that man was to be "justified (made right) by faith" in Christ. The text suggests three facts—

I. THAT CHRISTIANS ARE PROFESSEDLY ENDEAVOURING TO BE MADE RIGHT. They "seek to be justified by Christ." First: *They seek to be made right.* "To be justified," means to be rectified. Men apart from Christianity are wrong. They are wrong in *character*. Their moral heart, the mainspring of all their activities, is selfishness, not benevolence. They are wrong in their *relations*. Their relation to God is wrong, They are not His children but

aliens, not His friends but foes, not His loyal subjects but rebels. "To be justified" is to be made right in our moral character and our moral relations—right within and without, right with ourselves, with God and His universe. Secondly: They seek to be made right *through Christ.* "Justified by Christ." Men in all ages have sought to be made right in other ways, and by other persons. Some by Moses, some by Mahomet, some by Confucius, and some by Zoroaster. But apart from Christ there is no man, no institution, no system, by which we can be made morally right. Christ is the only Moral Rectifier. His atoning love restores to man both the image and the friendship of his God. It is suggested—

II. That whilst Christians are professedly endeavouring to be made right, THEY ARE LIABLE TO FALL INTO SIN: "We ourselves also are found sinners." Paul supposes that whilst seeking to be made right by Christ, there was a possibility of falling into sin. So long as Christians are in this world the *most perfect* of them are liable to error both in creed and conduct. Hence the warning. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." But if the *most perfect* are liable, how much more the others! The sins into which Christians are liable to fall are of two classes.

**First** : *Those that are common to all men.* Sins of carnality, avarice, pride, indulgence, envy, jealousy, &c. **Secondly** : *Those that are peculiar to the Christian profession.* What are they ? (1) Intolerant doctrinalism. There has been in all ages a tendency in those who profess Christianity to regard their own creed as the very Gospel itself. He who questions any of its tenets, is an infidel ; he who opposes it, is a heretic unfit for freedom, if not for life. Hence, alas ! professing Christians have in all ages been amongst the most acrimonious of polemics, the most bloody of persecutors. (2) Exaggerated pietism. Professing Christians have often paid more attention to pious devotions than to moral conduct. Hence many in all ages who have been distinguished for the earnestness with which they have attended to the forms of devotion have been found sadly wanting in that straightforwardness, veracity, uprightness, and generosity which are the glory of social life, and the invariable attributes of genuine Christianity. It is suggested—

III. That the sins into which Christians fall **EXPOSE CHRISTIANITY TO BLAME**. “Is, therefore, Christ the minister of sin ?” The question implies that the sins of Christians would by some be charged on Christ, and so they have. In all ages men have judged Christianity by its professed

disciples. They have seen Christ only as He has appeared in the mirror of narrow creeds, arrogant churches, conflicting sects, and hollow-hearted professors. And they have said, “Christ is the minister of sin.” But the blame is *unjust*, and the imputation is groundless. **First** : Because all Christ’s *doctrines* are against sin. All the doctrines of the Bible may be regarded as a revelation of the nature, glory, and obligation of holiness. The theology of the Gospel constitutes the means and motives to virtue. **Secondly** : Because all Christ’s *precepts* are against sin. Whilst not a single precept ever fell from the lips of Christ that gave sanction to a single sin in any form, the whole current of His moral teaching was an inculcation of virtue. He sums up all by saying, “Be ye holy, even as your Father in heaven is holy.” **Thirdly** : Because all Christ’s *example* is against sin. Amongst the heathen the moralists always talked much better than they lived. The Pharisees, Christ tells us, “say, and do not.” But Christ embodied His precepts in His life. “He was the holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” Even the man who betrayed Him, and the judge who sentenced Him to death, were bound to acknowledge the spotless purity of His life. **Fourthly** : Because all Christ’s *agency on earth* is against sin. Though in heaven,

He is now working on earth, and His grand work is to cleanse human souls from all sin, to cleanse them by "the washing of the Word," and by His blessed Spirit.

**CONCLUSION.**—Let us who profess to be seeking righteousness by Christ, see that we are not "found sinners;" for if we are found sinners, of all sinners we are the worst; not only because we sin with greater light, but because we calumniate the character of our Lord, and cause the world to call our Master the "minister of sin." "Let us walk worthy of our vocation and of our high endeavor."

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#### **THEOLOGY AND MORALITY.**

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."—1 John ii. 3-5.

THE text suggests two thoughts concerning morality—

**I. IT IS THE ONLY PROOF OF A TRUE THEOLOGY.** "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." First: *Obedience is the certain result of a true theology.* To know God is to love Him. Indeed, John repeatedly teaches that where He is not loved, He is not known; and where He, therefore, is loved

He will be obeyed. If we love Him we shall keep His commandments. (1.) Keep them heartily. It is a law of the heart to endeavor to please him we love. (2.) Keep them joyously. What we do in love we always do joyously. The labor of love is the music of life. Secondly: *Disobedience is a proof of a false theology.* "He that saith I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." This verse represents thousands of nominal Christians. They boast in their knowledge of God, they exult in their theology. And yet in their conduct they are selfish, worldly, false, ungenerous. They are, therefore, "liars." Where there is great orthodoxy there is often great falsehood. There is another thought suggested by the text concerning morality—

**II. ITS SPIRIT IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRUE THEOLOGY.**—What is the spirit of genuine morality? Love. And this *love is in the obedient man.* His conduct is the effect and expression of God's love, he could not obey without love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." The love is "perfection"—completed or filled up in His deeds. And this *love in him assures him of his union with God.* "Hereby know we that we are in Him." To be in Him is to be united to Him, as pupils to a master, as children to parents, &c.

## SEARCHING AFTER GOD.

"Canst thou by searching find out God?" Job. xi. 7.

OUR subject is, searching after God, and we offer three remarks:—

I. This is a **RIGHTEOUS** occupation. This will appear in the following observations. First: *It agrees with the profoundest instincts of our souls.* "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." The hunger of all hungers is the hunger of the soul for God. It is the hunger of the river for the ocean—every particle heaves towards it, and rests not until it finds it. The soul wants God—nothing less. Give it the mighty universe, and it will be empty without Him. Secondly: *It is stimulated by the manifestations of nature.* His footprints are everywhere, and they invite us to pursue His march. His voice echoes everywhere. There is no speech or language where it is not heard, and like the tones of a mother it draws us after Him. Every object in the universe is a finger-post pointing the soul to Him—every sound in nature is a note inviting to His presence. Thirdly: *It is encouraged by the declarations of the Bible.* "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him whilst He is near." "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." Fourthly: *It is aided by the manifestations of Christ.* "Christ is the brightness of

His Father's glory," &c. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." All this shows that a search after God is a righteous occupation.

II. This is a **USEFUL** occupation. First: There is no occupation so *spirit-quicken*ing. The idea of God to the soul is what the sunbeam is to nature. No other idea has such a life-giving power. It touches all the spring of being, puts every faculty on the stretch. Secondly: There is no occupation so *spirit-humbling*. Pride is one of the chief demons of the heart, and the idea of God alone can exorcise it. In the presence of God we feel our nothingness. Thirdly: There is no occupation so *spirit-ennobling*. The higher the pursuit of the man the more ennobling its influence upon his soul. He who searches after God rises infinitely superior to all mean and anxious cares concerning wealth, power, or fame. When the soul feels itself before God, the majesty of kings, and the splendor of empires are but childish toys.

III. This is an **ENDLESS** occupation. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Never fully. The finite can never comprehend the Infinite. It would be easier to put all the oceans of the world into a nutshell than for a creature to span immensity, easier to count the atoms of the globe than to count the ages of eternity. First: This endless work

agrees with the *inexhaustible powers of our nature*. We have faculties that never find a development here, not even in the case of those who have wrought most earnestly at the highest work for the longest time. Searching after anything less than the Infinite would never bring out into full and vigorous action the immeasurable potentialities within us. Secondly: This endless work agrees with the *instinct of mystery within us*. The soul wants mystery. Without mystery there is no inquisitiveness, no wonder, no adoration, no self-abnegation. In mystery we find the highest poetry of being, in mystery the sublimest worship. Reduce the universe to a series of intellectually appreciable propositions, bring God within the compass of our observation, and what are we then? Soulless clerks, nothing more.

CONCLUSION.—Thank God there are some things which we can and ought to find out concerning the Infinite, even here and now. We can find out the principle that rules Him in all His operations. What is that? The moral heart of His very Being is **Love**. We can appreciate love. “The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear Him.” We can and ought to find out His **FATHERHOOD**. We can understand and appreciate the father. The first feelings of love felt within us were toward a father,

the first name pronounced was father. God is our Father, and we may know Him as such.

#### THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,” &c.—Eph. vi. 10—17.

THE reason why we have to engage in this warfare, and need to maintain it, is because we are surrounded by enemies. The warfare is spiritual, and so, too, are the weapons. The figure employed is bold and striking.

I. THE WARFARE. It is not waged against man, but against the devil. It costs much to subdue our own flesh and blood; to bring every feeling and thought into obedience to Christ is a formidable task; but there is a fight beyond this. Nor is it with hostility in the world that we have to contend. These are only the outworks, or engines; the real foe is behind. He is subtle, strong, agile. He is a prince over many. They agree to hinder and harass. The fight is hot, resolute, full of direct purpose and aim—“we wrestle.” It is perilous, for the foe is unseen; nor do we always fully realize his strength and subtlety; the peril is greater if we contend as though against flesh and blood simply. Our unseen foes as real as our unseen friends. The undertaking vast.

II. THE WEAPONS. *They are sufficient.* Armour for the body,

the belt, the breastplate, the greaves. Arms to defend us, shield and helmet. Arms with which to assail the foe, the sword. They are amply sufficient, therefore, so long as we are not in retreat or flight. While we are fighting we have all that we need for our protection and defence, all that we need to beat down and destroy our foes.

*They are fit.* "Truth"—truth in the inward part. Power comes out of truth, and truth, or purity, comes of the renewing of the Holy Ghost. This makes us free. Otherwise it is as though there were no girdle to gather up the robes. "Righteousness;" not our own, which would not avail in the hour of need, through which the arrows would pierce, but that which comes of Christ and implies the strivings after holiness of a renewed nature. This makes us confident. "Peace" strengthens the feeble knees and gives endurance in the fight—the peace which the Gospel gives. "Faith," besides, as a shield protects us at all points, so should ~~faith~~ be all prevailing. The fiery darts are lust, fear of men, doubt concerning grace and so on; they kindle a fire in the ~~heart~~ which will consume if faith do not extinguish it. "Hope"—"put on for a helmet the hope of salvation." All men hope; the Christian hope is of salvation complete, final and ~~forever~~. Hope is strong when our

thoughts are in the thoughts of God. "The word of God," spiritual power wherewith to enter the domain of the prince of this world. If Eve had not let this sword slip she would not have been wounded. The Redeemer wielded it in the wilderness and on the cross. The preciousness of the Bible is not so much in this, that it comes from God; as in this, that God is in it.

III. THE ISSUE. Not uncertain. The Captain of our salvation has all power, is more interested in the issue than we are. Holiness is older than sin, is stronger than sin, will outlast sin. Christ has vanquished the devil. We have reason to be hopeful who have in us the life hid with Christ in God.

R. V. P.

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#### THE VALUE OF THE SOUL.

"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—Matt. xvi. 26.

I. CONSIDER THE IMMENSE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BODY AND SOUL. The body is a material thing, visible, tangible, and composed of so much lime and water, gas and framework, as the bodies of oxen are, and at last dies and becomes corrupt; but there is something more required to give intelligence and power, and that something is the soul, which never dies and can exist apart from material organism and be alone with God; hence the immense superiority of the latter and the

overwhelming responsibility involved. 1. The heathen knew not this truth—that the soul was destined to live for ever, and therefore cultivated the body and its passions. 2. Men, since Christ has come and taught them, know this truth; know that body and soul might be cast into hell, know all about the judgment day; but there is an extraordinary contradiction between theory and practice. They exchange their body, their pleasures, their refinements for the soul and lose eternal happiness.

II. CONSIDER THE UNSPEAKABLE VALUE OF THE SOUL. This is shown by the loss the soul sustains in exchange for the body and its passions. Millions who have made such exchange are suffering in hell and others are on the high road to it. Neither riches nor education can redeem the soul or purchase

heaven. Dives—the rich man, the educated man—was lost. Lazarus—the poor man, the ignorant man—was saved.

Learn from these considerations two facts. 1. *The worthlessness of all worldly objects of pursuit;* for the soul of the rich, when stripped of all the body's external meretricious accidents, is on the same footing as the soul of the poorest beggar. 2. *The religion of humility.* No respect of persons with God. All must seek the same way of salvation, and all need His help.

CONCLUSION.—All have one kind of soul, stained with sin, requiring to be cleansed by Christ. All require the one great exchange; the exchange of Christ's righteousness as that which will alone support us in the day of trial and in the day of judgment.

T. H. HOPE, B.A.

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## Seeds of Sermons on the Book of Proverbs.

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### THE UNREGENERATE AND THE REGENERATE.

"The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure: his work is right."—Prov. xxi. 8.

THE verse evidently expresses a contrast between the bad man and the good man. The verse may be read—"The way of the unregenerate man is froward and strange." Paul in writing

to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iii. 3), says, "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions; are ye not carnal and walk as men?" To "walk as men" he means to walk as unconverted men, and by "the way of man" in the text we are to understand the way of the unrenewed man.

I. The way of the UNREGENERATE. First: The way of an unconverted man is a “froward” way. The word “froward” means refractory, rebellious: and what is sin but frowardness? “Lo this only have I found, that God hath made man upright: but they have sought out many inventions.” (Ecclesiastes vii. 9.) The state of the unrenewed heart is that of rebellious insubordination. “Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?” Secondly: The way of an unconverted man is a “strange” way. It is “strange”—it is not the *original* way. Man was made to walk in the path of virtue and piety. It is “strange”—it is not the *authorized* way. It is not the high road sanctioned by Divine authority, it is a by-path which the foot of the transgressor has made. It is “strange”—it is a perplexing way, it is labyrinthian, misty, and perilous.

II. The way of the REGENERATE. “But as for the pure his work is right.” First: The regenerate are “pure.” They are cleansed by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost: their consciences “have been purged from dead works to serve the living God.” Secondly: The regenerate *work aright*. “His work is right.” The rectitude of “his work” is at once the effect and evidence of his purity. A right work implies two things, (1) A right standard. What is the right standard? Not the laws of man, not the customs of society, not the example of the holiest preacher, but the *will* of God. His character is the foundation, and His Will the rule of virtue in all worlds and

for ever. (2.) A right motive. He only does the right who obeys that will from the right motive, and the right motive is supreme love to God.

CONCLUSION.—If we are regenerate *right* is our watchword right is our goal. “It is common,” says Burke, “for men to say that such and such things are perfectly right, very desirable; but, unfortunately, they are not practicable. Oh, no. Those things which are not practicable are not desirable. There is nothing really beneficial that does not lie within the reach of an informed understanding and a well-directed pursuit. There is nothing that God has judged good for us that He has not given us the means to accomplish, both in the natural and moral world. If we cry like children for the moon, like children we must cry on.”

#### MATRIMONIAL MISERY.

“It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.”—Prov. xxi. 9.

“It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.”—Prov. xxi. 19.

“It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.”—Prov. xxv. 24.

Here is a wife the very opposite of that described by old Ben Jonson:—

“She who ne’er answers till a husband cools.  
Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules:  
Charms by accepting, by submitting  
sways,  
Yet has her humour most when she obeys.”

These verses lead us to consider three things.

I. THE TORTURING POWER OF A BRAWLING WIFE. “It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a braw-

ling woman in a wide house," &c. Solomon states two very uncomfortable positions as preferable to the company of a "brawling woman." First : "*The corner of a housetop.*" The roofs of the houses in the East were flat, and when solitude was courted the housetop was the resort. To dwell, however, in a corner of the housetop alone exposed to the scorchings of a tropical sun, and the fury of tropical storms was by no means a desirable thing. Yet far better would it be to dwell in solitude amid the fury of the elements, than to live among the snarls, yells, groans, and curses of a fiendish virago. In the one case his temper might remain calm and unruffled, in the other it would be in a state of perpetual irritation. The other uncomfortable position is—Secondly : "*The wilderness.*" This is a position more undesirable even than the housetop. The wilderness, away from all communications of society. Alone in dreariness and danger. "I had rather," says the wise son of Sirach, "dwell with a lion and a dragon, than to keep house with a wicked woman." "Every one," says Arnot, "has known some pair chained together by human laws where the heart's union has either never existed or been rent asunder. Two ships at sea are bound to each other by strong, short chains. As long as the sea remains perfectly calm, all may be well with both, though they do each other no good, they may not inflict much evil. But the sea never rests long, and seldom rests at all. Woe to these two ships when the waves begin to roll. There

are two conditions in which they might be safe. If they were either brought more closely together, or more widely separated, it might yet be well with them. If they were from stem to stern rivetted into one, or if the chain were broken, and the two left to follow independently their several courses, there would be no further cause of anxiety on their account. If they are so united that they shall move as one body, they are safe ; if they move far apart they are safe. The worst possible position is to be chained together, and yet have separate and independent motion in the waves. They will rasp each other's sides off, and tear open each other's heart, and go down together." The verses lead us to consider—

II. THE DEMORALIZING POWER OF SIN. "A brawling woman." What a monstrosity ! What an unnatural object ! The ideal of womanhood includes the tender, the gentle, the graceful, the reticent, and retiring. A "brawling" wife is still more unnatural. Pledged to bestow her strongest affections, and to render her loyal services to the man of her choice, she should ever appear before him as his ministering angel. To minister to his comforts and to stimulate him to the pure and the noble. Her calmness should soothe his temper when ruffled by the cares and struggles of secular life ; her tenderness should mollify the heart which the rough influences of the world tend to petrify into granite. Shakespeare's description of a true wife is not far from the Divine ideal :—

"Heaven witness,  
I have been to you a true and humble wife,

At all times to your will conformable :  
 Ever in fear to kindle your dislike,  
 Yea, subject to your countenance : glad or  
 sorry,  
 As I saw it incline. When was the hour  
 I ever contradicted your desire,  
 Or made it not mine too ? Or which of  
 your friends  
 Have I not strove to love, although I knew  
 He were mine enemy ? What friend of  
 mine  
 That had to him derived your anger, did I  
 Continue in my liking ? nay, gave notice  
 He was from thence discharged ? Sir, call  
 to mind  
 That I have been your wife, in this obedi-  
 ence,  
 Upwards of twenty years, and have been  
 blest  
 With many children by you : if, in the  
 course  
 And process of this time, you can report,  
 And prove it too, against mine honour  
 aught,  
 My bon i to wedlock, or my love and duty,  
 Against your sacred person, in God's  
 name  
 Turn me away : and let the foul'st cont-  
 tempt  
 Shut door upon me, and so give me up  
 To the sharpest kind of justice."

What has effected this trans-  
 figuration ; what has transform-  
 ed the calm angel into a brawler,  
 the loving wife into a fiend and  
 virago ? What ? Sin. Sin de-  
 humanizes humanity. The ver-  
 es lead us to consider—

**III. THE CAUTION REQUIRED IN MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCES.** If a wife has power to embitter a man's whole life, to render his life almost intolerable, with what caution should he enter the con-  
 nubial relationship ! And yet strange to say, men, aye and women too, are less cautious in choosing their companions for life than they are in choosing objects of most inferior descrip-  
 tion. People often bestow more care in selecting a fabric for their garment than in selecting their partner for life. Men often make more searching inquiries into the qualities of a cow, a dog, or a horse, which they intend to procure than into the qualities of a woman who they purpose to make their companion. No won-

der there is so much matrimo-  
 nial misery in the world when the alliances are formed either from blind impulse or mercen-  
 ary considerations. The man who without the exercise of his best judgment enters this, of all relationships the most endearing and Divine, either for lucre or from lusts, justly deserves the pitiless peltings of a termagant through the whole of his life. And the same may be said of a woman. There are "brawling" men as well as "brawling" women ; men who become the tormenting devils of those they swore to succour and to bless.

**CONCLUSION.**—"It is not good that the man should be alone." So saith the Almighty; so saith the deepest instincts of our nature ; so saith human experience. Yet better a thousand times be alone, better be on "the corner of a housetop," better in the howling wilderness amongst the prowling beasts of prey, better anywhere than with a "brawling" wife. Yet many wise and noble men have had to endure this. When Socrates was asked, "Why he endured his wife," "By this means," he replied, "I have a schoolmaster at home, and an example how I should behave myself abroad. For I shall be the more quiet with others, being thus daily exercised and taught in the forbearing of her."

#### THE WICKED.

"The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour fludeth no favour in his eyes. When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge. The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God over-throweth the wicked for their wickedness."—Prov. xxi. 10-12.

HERE is another of the many

descriptions of the wicked that have in this book gone before, and have yet to follow. Solomon is constantly hitting off sketches of the characters of the two great moral classes of mankind. As new phases of wickedness or goodness come under his eye, or start from his imagination, he portrays them. Here we have wicked men presented to us in three phases:—

I. AS ANIMATED BY THE WORST OF DISPOSITIONS. There are two dispositions of mind here indicated. First: *Malignity*. “The soul of the wicked desireth evil. The “evil” here is *injury* to his neighbour. “His neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.” He injures his neighbour not merely to gratify his greed and ambition, but his malice. He delights in suffering for its own sake. The throes of anguish are music in the ear of the wicked. “The poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood.” (Rom. iii. 13—15.) This is the very spirit of hell—this is Satanic sin. Sin is malevolence. Secondly: *Derision*. “The scorner is punished.” We have frequently met with the “scorner” before. The “scorner” is one destitute of all sense of reverence, of every sentiment of humility. He is haughty, profane, and heartless. “Fools make a mock at sin.” Wickedness scoffs at the sacred and the divine. Here we have the wicked men presented to us—

II. AS SUBJECT TO DIVINE PUNISHMENT. “The scorner is punished”—“God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.” The certainty that unrepentant wickedness will be

punished may be argued, First: *From the principle of moral causation*. God has established such a connection between character and condition that misery must ever spring from sin, and blessedness from virtue. Our present grows out of the past, hence our sins must find us out. What we morally sowed yesterday, we reap in experience to-day, and so on for ever. Secondly: *From the operations of moral memory*. Memory recalls sins, places them before the eye of conscience, and sets conscience aflame. Thirdly: *From the declarations of Scripture*. The wicked shall not go unpunished.” “The wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God.” Fourthly: *From the history of mankind*. Nations are an example. The Antediluvians, the Sodomites, the Jews. Individuals are an example. Moses, David, Judas, &c. Here we have the wicked presented to us—

III. AS STUDIED BY THE GOOD.—First: *The influence of their punishment when studied by the simple*. “The simple is made wise.” Elsewhere Solomon has said, “Smite a scorner and the simple will beware.” By the “simple” is to be understood the inexperienced; those who are comparatively innocent. When they see the wicked punished they are “made wise.” They see what comes of sin, and they learn to shun it. Secondly: *The influence of their punishment when studied by the wise*. “And when the wise is instructed he receiveth knowledge.” The simple become wise, and the wise increase in knowledge by it. Even David learned wisdom by the punishment of the wicked.

"Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." (Ps. cxix. 119.) Thirdly: *The influence of their punishment when studied by the righteous.* "The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked; but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness." Dr. Boothroyd thus translates the verse: "The righteous man teacheth or gives instruction to the house of the wicked, to turn away the wicked from evil." Dr. Wardlaw's remarks on this rendering are as follows: "A forced and unnatural supplement is thus avoided, and the difficulties, in a simple, critical view, are at least greatly lessened. In the Vulgate Latin version the same turn is given to the second part of the verse. 'The just man thinks maturely concerning the house of the wicked, that he may draw away the wicked from evil.'" Thus the wicked, in their malignant and scoffing spirit, and the punishment that follows them, become useful to the simple, the wise, and the righteous, as they are made the subjects of serious and devout reflection. Thus good men can get good out of the wicked, and true souls by thought can get good out of the devil himself.

#### THE CRY OF THE POOR.

"Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard."—Prov. xxi. 13.

In the 2nd series, vol. iii., page 61 of the Homilist will be found a Homily on the Poor Laws of the Bible founded on Deut. xv. 7—11. That discourse precludes

the necessity of stating many things here which would otherwise be required for the full elucidation of this text. A service too in the "Biblical Liturgy," containing nearly all the passages in the Bible, referring to the claims of the poor, it would be well to consult in considering the subject. The text leads us to consider three things, social distress, social heartlessness, and social retribution.

I. SOCIAL DISTRESS. "The cry of the poor." The poor have ever existed, and we are told that "they shall never cease out of the land." The poor may be divided into two classes. First: *The deserving.* There is a poverty that comes on men by circumstances over which they have no control: infirm bodies, diseased faculties, social oppression, untoward events. Such poverty deserves and demands commiseration and help. Such poverty is often associated not only with great intelligence, but with virtue and piety of a high order. "I have read," says Sir Walter Scott, "books enough, and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds, too, in my time; but I assure you I have heard higher sentiments from the poor, uneducated men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe, yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thought as to circumstances in the lots of friends and neighbours, than I ever yet met with, except in the pages of the Bible." Secondly: *The undeserving.* A large number of the poor in all countries have brought poverty on themselves. From laziness, extravagance,

intemperance have sprung their indigence and their woes. Far be it from me to suggest that all those who have got into penury and want by their own conduct, have no claims upon our compassion. There are many whose grief for their past conduct greatly intensifies the wretchedness of their poverty. Many who fruitlessly struggle to relieve themselves of their indigence with the determination to adopt a new course of life in the future. Such call for our pity and claim our helping hand.

**II. SOCIAL HEARTLESSNESS.** "Whoso stoppeth his ears." There are those who stop their ears at "the cry of the poor." At this moment pauperism in England (where it should scarcely have any existence at all) has reached an extent greater than in any past period of her history, and it is increasing every week. "The cry of the poor" is deeper and louder in England than ever, and getting new volume every day. There are two classes of men that should regard this "cry." First: *The wealthy.* Material good is limited, the material universe itself is finite. The more one man has of this world's goods the less remains for others. In this country there are tens of thousands who have appropriated to their own use more than their own moral share. Justice, to say nothing of mercy, demands that they should distribute of their abundance to the relief of the distressed. Secondly: *The legislating.* The resources of the country are in a great measure in the hands of our rulers. They can enrich them and impoverish them, they

can develop and direct them, and their grand object should be so to manage imperial matters that there should be no want and complaining within our borders. It is for them, by the cultivation of waste lands, and the promotion of emigration, to provide for the working classes fields of remunerative labour. This, however, they have shamefully neglected. Even the members of our present Government, notwithstanding the wonderful philanthropic profession which before they obtained power they rung into the ear of the country, are doing nothing to check poverty? What, for example, is the member for Birmingham, who for upwards of a quarter of a century has been dealing in that tall philanthropic talk by which he has won his popularity and power, doing to mitigate the growing pauperism of England? He and his colleagues talk of retrenchment and what do they retrench? Do they demonstrate to the nation the honesty of their professions by voluntarily surrendering a portion of the enormous incomes which they themselves derive from the State? No. They discharge poor labourers from the dock-yards, and humble clerks with large families, and thereby only augment the poverty of the land. In the name of Heaven, what is the good of a Government if it cannot overcome pauperism?

**III. SOCIAL RETRIBUTION.** The text tells us, "whoso stoppeth his ear at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard." Alas, there are many of the rich and the ruling who stop their ears. Their ears

are opened to fawning flattery and panegyric adulterations. The cheers of platforms and the laudations of journals are music to their souls. But the long, deep wail of the poor, which not only comes up from all the alleys of the towns and cities of England, but from thousands of the wretched hovels in rural scenes, they cannot hear. For such retribution will come. With what measure they mete it shall be meted to them again. They shall one day cry, "but shall not be heard." "He shall have judgment without mercy that have showed no mercy." This retribution often occurs in this life; it is certain to occur at last. "Inasmuch as ye have not done it to the least

of these my brethren, ye have not done it unto me." "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you."

CONCLUSION. Heaven forbid that we should stop our ears at "the cry of the poor." Let us commiserate them, let us help them to the utmost of our ability. Howard's rule is this, a rule which he embodied in his noble life, "That our superfluities give way to other men's convenience: that our conveniences give way to other men's necessities, and that even our necessities sometimes give way to other men's extremities." "Charity," says Chrysostom, "is the scope of all God's commands."

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## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

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### THE AUGUST METEORS.

A VERY ancient tradition prevails in the mountain districts which surround Mount Pelion, that during the night of the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6th) the heavens open, and lights, such as those which surround the altar during the solemn festivals of the Greek Church, appear in the midst of the opening. It has been thought by Quetelet, and Humboldt considered the opinion probable, that this tradition had its origin in the successive apparition of several well-marked displays of the August meteors. If this be so, the date of the shower has slowly shifted—as that of the November shower is known to have done—until now another holiday is associated with it,

and the simple peasants of Southern Europe recognise in the falling stars of August the "fiery tears of good St. Lawrence the Martyr."

It is wonderful to contemplate the change which in a few short years has come over all our views respecting these meteors. Ten years ago it was considered sufficiently daring to regard the August system as part of a zone of cosmical bodies travelling in an orbit as large perhaps as that of our own earth. Now, the distance even of Neptune seems small in comparison with that from which those bodies have come to us, which flash athwart our skies in momentary splendor, and then vanish for ever, dissipated into thinnest dust by the seemingly feeble resistance of our atmosphere.

Accustomed to associate only such giant orbs as Saturn and Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune, with orbits which must be measured by hundreds of millions of miles, the astronomer sees with wonder these tiny and fragile bodies traversing paths yet vaster than those of the outer planets. And even more remarkable, perhaps, is the immensity of the period which the August shooting-star has occupied in circling around the central orb of our system. Each one of the bodies which will be seen next Tuesday has been in the neighbourhood of the earth's orbit many times before : yet the last visit made by them took place years before the birth of any person now living, since the period of meteoric revolution has been proved to be upwards of 118 years.

Another strange feature of the August meteor-system is the enormous volume of the space through which, even in our neighbourhood, the meteor-stratum extends. The famous November system is puny by comparison. Striking that system at a sharp angle, the earth traverses it in a few hours, so that if the earth went squarely through it the passage would occupy, it has been estimated, less than one hundred minutes. Thus the depth of the November meteor-bed has been calculated to be but one hundred thousand miles or so. But the earth takes nearly three days in passing through the August meteor-system, although the passage is much more direct. For the August meteors come pouring down upon our earth almost

from above, insomuch that the radiant point on the heavens whence the shower seems to proceed is not very far from the North Pole ; whereas the November meteors meet the earth almost full front, as a rain-storm blown by a head-wind drifts in the face of the traveller. Thus the depth of the August system has been estimated at three millions of miles ; and this depth seems tolerably uniform, so that along the whole of that enormous range (to be counted, as we have said, by hundreds of millions of miles) through which the August ring extends, the system has a depth exceeding some four hundred times the diameter of the earth on which we live.

Yet it is probable that the whole weight of the August system, vast as are its dimensions, is infinitely less than that of many a hill upon the earth's surface. For the weight of the separate falling stars of the system has been determined (by one of the wondrously subtle applications of modern scientific processes) to be but a few ounces at the outside ; and even during the most splendid exhibition of falling stars the bodies which seem to crowd our skies are many miles apart, while under ordinary circumstances thousands of miles separate the successively appearing meteors. Indeed, it was well remarked by an eminent member of the Greenwich corps of astronomers, that the planets tell us by the steadiness of their motions, that they are swayed by no such attractions as heavily-loaded meteor-systems would exert. "The weight of

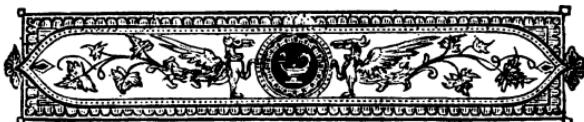
meteor-systems must be estimated by pounds and ounces, not by tons," he remarked.

The spectroscope has taught us something of the constitution of these bodies, though they never reach the earth's surface. Professor Herschel, third in that line of astronomers which has done so much for science, has employed an August night or two in trying to find out what the August meteors are made of. With a spectroscope of ingenious device, constructed by Mr. Browning, F.R.A.S., for the special purpose of testing the light of these swiftly moving bodies, Professor Herschel was successful in examining seventeen meteors.

..... To use the words of the observer, "their condition" (when rendered visible to us by their combustion) "is exactly that of a flame of gas in a Bunsen's burner, freely charged with the vapor of burning sodium; or of the flame of a spirit lamp newly trimmed, and largely dosed with a supply of moistened salt."

It is strange to consider what becomes of all the sodium thus dispersed throughout the upper regions of air. There can be no doubt that in some form or other—mixed or in combination—it reaches the earth. The very air we breathe must at all times contain, in however minute a proportion, the cosmical dust thus brought to us from out the interplanetary spaces. Nay, for aught we know, purposes of the utmost importance in the economy of our earth, and affecting largely the welfare of the creatures which subsist upon its surface,

may be subserved by this continual downpour of meteoric matter. We know already that the different meteor-systems are differently constituted. For instance, the white November stars are much less rich in sodium than the yellow August ones. Each system, doubtless, has its special constitution, and thus the air we breathe is continually being dosed with different forms of metallic dust, —now one metal, now another, being added, with results in which, did we but know it, we are doubtless largely interested. Nor is it certain that deleterious results do not occasionally flow from an overdose of some of the elements contained in meteors. It might be plausibly maintained, on evidence drawn from known facts and dates, that occasionally a meteoric system has brought plague and pestilence with it. The "sweating sickness" even has been associated (though we admit, not very satisfactorily) with the 33-year returns of great displays of November shooting stars. Without insisting on such hypotheses as these, which scarcely rest on stronger evidence than the notion that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was brought about by an unusually heavy downfall of sodium-laden (that is, salt-laden) meteors, we may content ourselves by pointing out that the labours of eminent chemists have shown that the air is actually loaded at times with precisely such forms of metallic dust as the theories of astronomers respecting meteors would lead us to look for.—*Spectator.*



# A HOMILY

ON

## *Vails.*

“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.”—2 Cor. iii. 15.

(Concluded from page 72.)

HERE is (2) the veil of *conceit, or intellectual pride*. This is of course a veil closely connected with the one we have just considered. It is, in fact, one of its folds. In speaking of this veil, I am conscious that care should be taken not to speak in terms of disparagement of the intellect itself. Sometimes we hear unbelievers rebuked in language which must fail either to convince or conciliate them, because it depreciates and insults the very reason with which God has endowed us, and which so widely separates us from the beasts that perish. Truth never requires us to detract from any gift of God, least of all must we detract from that which is the glory of man. Whatever may be the full meaning of the phrase, “the image of God,” it is clear that one feature of that image must be the intellect without which, as a door, no truth of any value can enter into our minds and hearts. And yet there may be such a thing as intellectual conceit, or pride, an extravagant estimate of the strength of the wing of reason to soar into the heights of universal truth. Reason itself makes no man an unbeliever, but the abuse of reason may, just as appetite makes no man a glutton or a sot, but the abuse of appetite.

It is the fashion of some in our days to speak of philosophy and faith as if the two were in essential and everlasting antagonism to each other, as if the greater the philosopher the greater the unbeliever, and the greater the believer the less the philosopher. On the contrary, we are confident that a true philosophy and a true faith go hand in hand, that they have been wedded in heaven, and can never be divorced on earth; and the Scriptures never warn us against science, except the science falsely so called, nor against philosophy, except that which is a vain deceit. There is a peril in our times, it must be confessed, arising from the almost exclusive attention which is being directed to the study of the wonders of external nature. It is the age of scientific research and discovery, during which more secrets have been extorted from the material world than have rewarded the investigations of men in all past ages. The great association of our wise men has just been held, in which they have been displaying the fruits of their patient researches, and they are such as to lead the devout heart to say, "How marvellous are Thy works—in wisdom hast Thou made them all—and the earth is full of Thy riches." But it is obvious that the fascinations of scientific investigation may blind the mind to the claims of other truth which is far higher in itself and which depends for its understanding on other qualities of heart than mere keenness of intellectual power. Not only may a man be so absorbed in an inferior pursuit as to neglect a superior one, but he may be so exclusively engaged in it as to lose the aptitude which is needful for the appreciation of the higher knowledge. The mathematician may dwell so long in the subtle region of the mysteries of figures and formulas that he may never dream of a world in which they play no part whatever, and may not believe in anything which is not within the control of some comprehensive calculus. The chemist may so busy himself among acids, and alkalies, and crucibles, and retorts that he may deign no thought to any-

thing which he cannot fuse or analyze. The electrician, radiant with joy at the universe of facts which reveal themselves in the domains of magnetism, and galvanism, and electricity, may be in danger of discarding as truth everything which cannot emit a spark or direct a force. And the naturalist and physiologist may be so addicted to specimens, and species, and protoplasm, that all things else may seem tame and profitless. Now, we repeat it, that such investigations we not only do not resent, but welcome. Let every truth which is laid bare in any department of the physical world be hailed, and brought with songs of thanksgiving into the temple which science is rearing through the ages, to the glory of Him, all whose works do praise Him, while all His saints do bless Him. But we also repeat that the fascination which is exerted by these pearls of knowledge may draw men away from the pearl of great price, and that they may even despise religion because its evidence and its nature are so different from anything with which they have been familiar.

The Bible introduces the philosopher into a world which is all but entirely new. It does not require his calculus, or his crucible, or his battery, or his microscope. Its truths are different from any that can be reached by these means and processes of investigation. What can they tell us about sin? and sin is one of the chief matters of which the Bible treats. The Bible does not create sin, it finds it; and even the philosopher finds it, and must acknowledge, if he will but think for a moment, that sin is at least as unquestionable and as important a fact in humanity as any other thing. It deals not only with sin as a fact, but guilt as a feeling. This, too, is not created by the Bible; it exists everywhere as an element of torment in the heart, and as an element which is felt the more keenly, the more healthy and sensitive the conscience becomes. The Bible deals with the idea of a nobler life. Even this idea it does not wholly create, but finds in differing strength in different men, and gives

to it greater largeness, and depth, and purity, and supplies the means by which it can be attained. It deals with death, and with death in its moral aspects, with its fears and misgivings. And it deals with eternity, with that after-state which, let men say what they choose, looms before them, in spite of all their efforts to escape all thought of it as at least a possibility; for philosophy becomes folly if it venture to deny that there may be a life even beyond this life. The Bible declares that there is, and a life, too, the complexion of which is determined here and now. The Bible tells us of the incarnation, and of the cross, and of the burial, and of the resurrection of our Redeemer from the grave. Now the reason of man could tell us nothing of these things apart from the Bible, nor could it tell us anything of any past event apart from history, and such monuments as may have survived the ravages of time. That profound mysteries are mingled up with this revelation of the infinite love of God is admitted. But it surely is not for the human intellect to proudly turn away from it on this account. How many doors of nature it has knocked at, but in vain? How many subtle forces it has sought to seize, and see in their inmost essence, but in vain? Does it insist on fathoming every depth in the Scriptures, and yet does it submit without murmuring to know that there are depths in nature which are fathomless? Does it hear and obey the voice which nature utters, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no further"?—and does it despise and resent such a limitation in the domain of the Divine Word? Then it becomes not the reason which is reverent, but the reason which is proud. It imposes conditions upon God himself, instead of respecting the conditions which He imposes. It will not accept the truth on which the light shines full, because there is truth which lies in darkness. But where in this case is the *vail*, the *vail* which intercepts the knowledge of salvation? *The vail is on the heart.*

(3.) There is the *vail* of prejudice and tradition. No one,

surely, will deny that such a thing as prejudice does exist in the human heart. There are few vices of the mind which are more common, and few that are more obstinate and invincible. I might also say that there are few that commit greater robbery upon the man himself. How many men are enemies to each other simply from prejudice? They know nothing evil of each other, but have formed an adverse judgment without reason, and lose the benefit of each other's company, fellowship, and sympathy. What a fearful amount of evidence a prejudice can resist! It is like a stone, large and heavy, filling up the doorway of a man's soul; and the truth which enters, instead of entering without difficulty, has first to roll away the huge obstruction. A very small proportion of the truth that will vanquish a prejudice will suffice to carry the fullest conviction to an open and candid mind. A prejudice is like a thick bandage over the eyes; the man who wears it can be in midnight darkness even amid the blaze of the noon-day sun. Now prejudice often assumes the form of holding fast to a traditional faith. The man believes what he has been taught because he has been taught it without any intelligent comprehension of the grounds upon which his faith rests. This was the very case in point. The Jews, of whom the apostle is here speaking, were Jews who held fast to *Moses*, not the true *Moses*, but the *Moses* as he had been represented to them by their authoritative teachers. Had they listened to the true *Moses*, they would have been prepared to welcome Christ, for he spake of Him when he testified of His sufferings and the glory that should follow. But when *Moses* was read in their hearing, or by themselves, he was read, not through a clear medium as when one sees objects through the pure air by the light of the sun, but he was read through a jaundiced eye and a medium which distorted him. They brought their conceptions with them, and made their own *Moses* in a large degree. They were like men who consult the oracle, and tell the oracle what shall be his response, or who speak

in an echoing vault, and find their voice returned to them. Things are to us in great measure what we are to them. With the pure, God shows Himself pure, and with the froward God shows himself froward. And if we bring prejudice or a traditional faith with us, a faith, I mean, which we have not ourselves tested and proved, and which does not live within us and support our life, then we need not expect to see the truth. It is a serious thing for a man to say that he has made up his mind upon any great question of religion, and that he does not mean to re-open it any more. There are, of course, times when a man may say this, especially with respect to such truths as are capable of being tested by our own life. They sustain us, comfort us, strengthen us, purify us, lift us up above the tyranny of sense, or the corrupting power of temptation, or the depressing influence of sorrow, and make us feel that the heavenly life is the only true life for man. When this is our experience, we may well refuse to listen to any exhortation to change our faith, saying, as the blind man said when cured, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

But with respect to such elements of our faith as we have not proved for ourselves as we have inherited, just as a man inherits property, but with far less assurance that it is valid and incontestable, let us not set ourselves in stubbornness against any new and fresh light. Truth is of greater value than our convictions, for truth is essentially of God, but our convictions may be as false as they are strong. Let every avenue of our soul be opened to the free entrance of the blessed light of heaven, whoever be the man through whose medium it comes to us. Let us have a better reason for our faith than that we have always held it, or that our father held it. It was because the Jews had no better reason that they called Christ Beelzebub—that they mocked Him—scourged him—crucified Him and that even to the days of Paul : yes, and even down to our own days when Moses is read, *the veil is on their eyes.*

(4.) The only other *vail* which I have time to mention, and which I can but treat with scantiness, and imperfect hints, is the *vail* of lust, self-interest, or any other sin which has acquired a mastery over the heart and life. As we find man at present, he is not in the condition of one between whose understanding and the truth there lies no obstructive or disturbing medium. We have just spoken of the hindering power of a prejudice, we have now to speak of the hindering power of a sin, be the sin what it may. There is nothing that can so darken the eye of the soul as a sin, and hence no man who is addicted to sin can see so clearly as the man whose soul is pure whether in fact or in aspiration. Our Saviour makes frequent allusion to the fact that unbelief has not an intellectual so much as a moral root. He does not admit that the light is insufficient: he declares that its beams are unwelcome. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and that men love the darkness rather than the light, because their *deeds are evil*." On one occasion he said to the Jews in a tone of vigorous remonstrance, "How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God?" We see the influence which a sin may exert upon the judgment every day. Who is sanguine in his endeavours to persuade a man to relinquish a traffic, however unhallowed and mischievous, provided only it brings in ample gains. A heavy purse is a sufficient answer to all your arguments, however intrinsically weighty they may be. You may plead the poverty which it creates, the crimes it inspires, the orphans and widows which it leaves everywhere as the dire monuments of its destructive and baleful power; you may appeal to the sense of our common humanity, and even to the final and terrible judgment of Him who will demand a strict account of our stewardship; but you will find that all these considerations are vain, and light as chaff thrown against the hurricane wind. The man will not heed you. Not that he will stand silent as a con-

victed felon. He has his defences, for sin is an eloquent speaker, and can produce its arguments. He sees no evil in the traffic, why should he? He compels no one to buy; and they may buy as little as they choose. Besides, he does not create a want, he only supplies it where it exists, and if he did not supply it some one else would, so that if there be evil there would be the same were his agency altogether withdrawn. Thus he reasons, but then those arguments are not the considerations which either led him to begin the traffic, or to continue in it. They never occur to him except when he is put on his defence. The one abiding and omnipotent motive is that the trade is lucrative. This is the *vail* which is before his eyes, and which no amount of light will suffice to penetrate. No further illustration is needed to set clearly before you the great and solemn fact that a man's life has a powerful influence upon his faith, and that unbelief arises not so much from defective evidence, as from the existence of some cherished sin which intercepts the clear light of heavenly truth. Men and brethren, let me bring the matter home to such of you as are still among the unbelieving. Why do you not believe? Put not the question from you, for it will return again. Why do you not believe? Is it that the evidence which should warrant your faith is not adequate. What, not adequate for you, when it has been sufficient, and indeed more than sufficient, for thousands of the most keen and exalted intellects which have ruled as monarchs of thought the human race! They found it not merely sufficient, but irresistible. They were not superstitious men, nor weak men, nor credulous men, but brought to the investigation of Christianity intellects whose original greatness was disciplined and enriched by the most varied culture, and they bowed in adoration and tears at the foot of the cross, and felt that there alone they could leave their sins and sorrows. It will be in vain that you plead then the defectiveness of the light; it has been bright enough to

enable millions to find their way to heaven, and it has lost none of its lustre with the flow of years. And if the light be sufficient, you will not surely allow that your natural powers of intelligence are defective. Were this the case your unbelief would be your misfortune, not your crime. These two things lie beyond question—that you have light enough, and that your faculty of understanding is vigorous enough for all the service which God requires at your hands. Why then do you not believe? Is it not that there is in your life something—I say not what, but something, or perhaps many things which plead for continuance, some lust which pleads for gratification, and which keeps Christ standing at the door? Is it not that the spirit of the world has taken possession of you, the thirst for wealth, for honour, for pleasure, and that you feel this to be incompatible with a life of true and earnest godliness? It is to this very thing the apostle refers in those startling words. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not lest the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ should shine into them. What say you? Will you submit to this blinding process? Or, will you cry to the Great Healer, and say to Him, “Lord, that I may receive my sight?” The veil, you will remember, cannot remain for ever. The hand of death will tear it away; but the light which then will fall upon your eyes will not be the light of salvation, but that which discovers to you, when too late, the blessedness which you have bartered for the pleasures of a day. Oh! how thin a partition separates this world from that to which we are going. A pulse stopped, a heart arrested, and the vain and bewildering enchantments of this life will drop from you, and before you will stand, in full disclosure, the solid, abiding realities of eternity. May the Lord strip from you the veil of sin to-day that you may enjoy, even now, some faint glimpses of the glory yet to be revealed.

*Halifax.*

ENOCH MELLOR, M.A.

# Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

*Subject: PICTURE OF SUFFERING SAINTHOOD.*

*(Continued from p. 72.)*

“ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?  
Why art thou so far from helping me,” &c.—Psa. xxii.

**H**AVING already offered historical and exegetical remarks on this psalm, we have now, according to our promise, to gather up and arrange its Homiletic suggestions. In order to economize space, we must omit the printing of the entire text, and request our readers to keep the Psalm open before them while they study our observations. We shall endeavour to bring the whole of these thirty-one verses under two general heads.

I. The **PRAYER** of the *righteous* under great suffering. Whether the Psalm represents the experience of the pious writer himself, or all the righteous of the nation collectively, or Him who was pre-eminently the “ Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” may be a matter for debate ; but one thing is clear, that the sufferings of the *good* are the grand subject. It gives us humanity, consciously righteous, praying under overwhelming suffering. We have here to notice—

First : *The sufferings.* In analyzing these sufferings we find them to be of two kinds, spiritual and social. (1.) Spiritual. Here is a consciousness of two most distressing things. (a) Here is a feeling of God’s desertion. “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ” “ Our Lord appropriated these words to Himself when on the Cross (see Matt. xxvii. 46), substituting for the Hebrew verb the corresponding word in the Aramaean dialect then in use among the Jews.” The language as used by Christ, must be taken in one of two senses. Either as expressing a *fact* or a *feeling* ;—a fact in relation to God, or a feeling in relation to our Lord. In other words, it must be considered either that God had actually deserted Him, or that Christ merely had the *feeling* that He had done so. Which is the

more probable? I accept the latter, and elsewhere I have endeavoured to vindicate the point.\* There is perhaps no feeling in the universe more distressing than the feeling of Divine desertion,—this is hell. (b) Here is a feeling that God disregarded his prayer. “O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not.” He felt that his prayer was unanswered, though it had been incessant in the “daytime” and in “the night season;” and addressed to Him in whom “His fathers had trusted,” and who had “delivered them.” What greater distress can there be than the feeling that all our cries to God are unanswered? Here then is suffering of the most poignant and terrible description. Let the soul feel that it has lost God, that He has withdrawn from it, and disregards for ever its cries, and can it have a deeper and a darker hell? Saul at Endor is an example. The sufferings were (2) Social. (a) The sufferer was the victim of social *contempt*. “I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.” There is the contemptuous *laugh*. The sneering, jeering grin. The contemptuous *look*. “They shoot out the lip.” They made grimaces in order to express derision. There is the contemptuous *nod*. “They shake the head.” All this describes almost to the letter what Christ had to endure from His enemies when suspended on the Cross. “And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross, &c. The contemptuous language, “He trusted to the Lord that He would deliver Him.” Social contempt is an element of severe affliction to all endowed with social love. To feel cast off by society is next in distress to the feeling of being cast off by God Himself. (b) The sufferer was the victim of social *cruelty*. The savage cruelty of His enemies is graphically depicted in verses 12 to 18. “Many bulls have compassed me,” &c., &c. They were as savage as bulls, “ravelling” lions, and ferocious dogs. “They pierced His hands,” “they parted His garments,” they “cast lots for His vesture.” The effect of all this cruelty

\* See “Genius of the Gospel,” p. 708.

upon Him was (1) Physical exhaustion. "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax: it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like potsherd: and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws: and Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." His strength was gone, his faculties were prostrate, the tide of life had almost ebbed its last drop away. (2.) Skeletonic appearance. "I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me." He was all but dead. A ghastly, feebly-breathing corpse. Such is the suffering here depicted,—spiritual and social. Sufferings more agonizing, more overwhelming, can scarcely be imagined; and all endured by a nature that *felt itself to be righteous*. The sufferer might well exclaim, "All ye that pass by, behold, and see if there be any sorrows like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger." (Lamentations i. 12.) Whether Christ is the sufferer here depicted or not, one thing is obvious, that no man or body of men ever appeared in history to whom the language so fully and faithfully applies. Martyrs have suffered, but on the rack and in the flames they have felt God to be with them. Amidst social contempt and cruelty they have felt conscious of the Divine Presence. We have next to notice—

Secondly: *The Supplications.* In examining the supplicatory part of this Psalm, there are three subjects worthy of notice. (1.) The character in which God is addressed. He is addressed (a) In His *absolute* character. "Thou art holy." The suppliant, amidst all his wretchedness, holds on to the conviction that God is holy. God's holiness is perfect, undervived, the immutable standard and universal fountain of all virtue. He is "Light." Hell feels and acknowledges this. (b) In His *relative* character. (1.) The God of his fathers. He regarded him as the God who "inhabited the praises of Israel," as the God in whom "his fathers trusted," to whom they cried in their distress, and were delivered (verses 3 to 5). (2.) The God of his earliest life. "But Thou art He that took me out of the womb: Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon Thee from the womb: Thou art my God from my mother's belly." This means, I owe my life to Thee, Thou broughtest me into the world, guarded me in infancy, and caused me to trust in Thee from my earliest

years. "Thou art my God from my mother's belly." And in the first verse he exclaims, "My God, my God." Though the sufferer felt that God had deserted him, he still held on his claim to Him as his God. His sufferings consumed not his faith: "though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." (2.) The object for which He is addressed. He prays for two things. (a) The approach of God towards him. "Be not Thou far from me." This is repeated in the 11th and 19th verses. He implores the Almighty to cross the awful chasm and draw near to him. God's presence is the great want of the soul. In it there is "fullness of joy;" nowhere else. (b) His deliverance from suffering and death. "Deliver my soul from the sword: my darling from the power of the dog." A man's life is his "darling" treasure. "Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give in exchange for his life." God alone can preserve life, and redeem it from the power of its enemies and the source of its sorrows. (3.) The earnestness with which He is addressed. The first two verses breathe the intensest earnestness. "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not: and in the night season," &c. Earnestness is an essential element in true prayer. God requires it, not because of His reluctance to bless, but because it is the state of soul necessary in order properly to receive and rightly to appreciate and use His benedictions.

The other general head under which we have to bring the contents of this Psalm is—

II. The RELIEF of the *righteous* from great suffering. Relief came as the result of his prayer, and hence from the 22nd verse to the end of the chapter there is expressed, not only the spirit of relief, but of exhortation and praise. The results of the relief were threefold :—

Firstly: *The celebration of Divine goodness.* "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren," &c. He resolves to express his gratitude *publicly* "in the midst of the congregation." And not satisfied with celebrating His goodness himself, he calls upon others to join him in the exercise, assigning strong reasons for the same. "For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted: neither hath he hid His face from him: but when he cried unto Him He heard. My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation. I will pay my vows

before them that fear him." Tribulation swells the notes of praise.

Secondly: *The conversion of the world to the true God.* "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the Governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him; and none can keep alive his own soul." Observe here three things. (1.) The *means* of this universal conversion. "They shall remember and turn unto the Lord." There is no turning to God either individually or nationally without *thought*. "I thought of my ways," &c. Men must begin to "remember." (2.) The *reason* of this universal conversion. "For the kingdom is the Lord's," &c. He has a right to the homage of all souls. (3.) The *completeness* of this universal conversion. It will comprehend all men. (α) All *national* distinctions. "All the kindreds of the nations." All the varied tribes of the earth will be included. (β) All *social* classes. (1.) The rich. "They that be fat." (2.) The poor. "They that bow down to the dust." (3.) The dying. "None can keep alive his own soul." The aged, the sick, the infirm—all.

Thirdly. *The celebration of His religion to the end of time.* "A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this." Not only is there a time to come when the whole of a generation shall be converted to God, but all the generations succeeding shall celebrate His praise. Posterity and unborn generations shall worship Him. "Yea, the people that are not born shall declare this." \*

\* The keen-eyed preacher will discover in this article the outlines of many sermons.

# Gems of Thought.

## EMBLEMS OF SOUL WORK.

*Subject: SOUL NAVIGATION.*

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters ; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.”—Psa. cvii. 23, 24.

**N**AVIGATION is amongst the most ancient of human arts. The first use of ships as distinguished from canoes, boats, and galleys, appears to have been by the early Egyptians, who are believed to have reached the western coast of India, besides navigating the Mediterranean. Tyre followed, and soon their nautical arrangements and achievements threw those of Egypt into the shade. Tyre laid the seas under tribute, and made their cities the great emporiums of Eastern and European trade. The discovery of the mariner’s compass in the fifteenth century gave a great impulse to navigation—ships have been multiplying, and their architecture improving ever since. Vessels now in every variety cover every sea, and visit every port. As three-fourths of the earth’s surface is covered with the waters, and the human population is ever on the increase, the necessity for navigation grows in urgency every day. Old Ocean is becoming more and more the crowded high-road of nations.

We refer to this art in order to illustrate a Navigation of a higher kind—the navigation of souls. Christ Himself in one of His parables speaks of the world in which we live as a sea (Matt. xiii. 14—37), and Paul alludes to man as a voyager, “having hope as an anchor cast within the veil.” We offer three remarks concerning Soul Navigation.

**I. ITS WEATHER IS FOULER TO SOME THAN TO OTHERS.** In material Navigation some seamen are far more fortunate than others. There are those who have spent a long life at sea, and who have scarcely met with a catastrophe, or encountered a storm. They have sailed under bright skies, and on peaceful waters. The nautical life of others has been little else than difficulty and danger. They have had to battle with the billows, and wrestle with the hurricane. It is so in soul life. The

sea over which some sail is like a lake, without a ripple, and propitious gales fill their sails, and gently press them onward to the desired haven. Others are always in darkness and tempest. Like Paul in the Adriatic, they sail often without "sun or stars," "whilst no small tempest lays on them." Often they cry out like the Psalmist, "Deep calleth unto deep ; all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me."

This difference is partly *necessary* and partly *moral*. A man's condition in life depends greatly both upon his temperament and upon the external circumstances under which he has been brought up. Some have temperaments that are impulsive and tempestuous ; others gentle and pacific. Some are surrounded by circumstances suited to soothe and to please, others by those tending ever to agitate and distress. This difference in the temperaments and circumstances of men, whilst it reveals the sovereignty of that God who arranges human affairs after the council of His own will, should at the same time dispose us to act with tender consideration in all our intercourse with our fellow-men. But there is a *morality* in this difference that should not be overlooked. Men have power to rule in a great measure their own temperaments, and control their own circumstances. The man to whom God has given the most fiery passions He has given corresponding intellect for control. Where there is strong impulse, there is generally an equally strong judgment as a balance. Intellect has the power to hush the storms, and quench all the volcanoes within. This being so, is not man *responsible* for his condition in life ? The foul weather he himself has often created. The winds that pelt him he has raised, the clouds that blacken his sky he has himself bespread, and the billows that beat on him he has lashed into their fury.

In soul Navigation there is—

II. AN EXPOSURE TO TERRIBLE DISASTERS. The perils to which the mariner is exposed are proverbially great—perils arising from rocks and quicksands, hurricanes and dead calms, pirates, fogs, and mutinies. Hence shipwrecks abound. It is said that at an average no less than fifteen hundred English ships are wrecked every year. But these disasters are only shadows of the disasters to which human souls are exposed in sailing over the sea of life. There are the rocks and

quicksands of inexperience, there are the fogs and dead calms of thoughtlessness and ignorance. There are the prowling pirates of infernal spheres haunting every sea, and there are the mutinies of corrupt passions and unholy lusts which war against the soul. How many souls are shipwrecked every day! They go down into the abysses of passion, worldliness, and impiety. What anxiety does the reeling, plunging vessel about to sink with all on board, awaken in the heart of the spectators! Every looker on invokes Heaven to prevent the threatened catastrophe, and all are ready heartily to unite in any project likely to avert the doom of that sinking bark. The most inhuman will make a rush to rescue a drowning man from the billows about to bury him. But how little do we feel concerning the shipwreck of souls! We see the young by thousands around us, sinking beneath the whelming waves of vanity, sensuality, and worldliness. Instead of sailing over the sea of life like gallant ships, objects of beauty and instruments of usefulness, they are tossed about like painted logs of wood, sometimes visible and sometimes buried out of sight, and destined to go down and rot in the abysses of corruption.

In soul navigation—

III. THERE NEED BE NO SHIPWRECKS. All mariners desire, of course, a propitious voyage; but though they use their best efforts to secure one, they are often disappointed and have to endure the hardships of shipwreck. The time may come when naval science shall become so accurate and comprehensive, and naval architecture so thoroughly in keeping with the laws of nature, and naval skill so perfect, that shipwrecks might be amongst the rarest of human events. Be this, however, as it may, moral shipwrecks need *never* occur. In all cases man is responsible for them, and this for three reasons.

First. *He has an infallible chart.* If a mariner had a nautical chart absolutely perfect as to the measurement of the waters, the location of rocks, reefs, quicksands, islands, and currents, he would have one of the necessary conditions for insuring a safe voyage. As yet, however, such a chart does not exist. The ocean has still a world of secrets unrevealed to man. Not so with the soul-voyager, he has an infallible chart. A chart which reveals life true to eternal fact. There

is not a danger it does not expose. It draws the very line over which you should sail if you would sail safely and meet a prosperous end. It tells you how to avoid all the perils lying beneath the wave, how to escape the fierce hurricanes, how to sail through peaceful seas and into sunny climes. What a fool is that mariner who has a chart and never consults it ! But a greater fool far is he who is sailing to eternity and never looks into that Book which kind Heaven has given him to guide him on his way.

Secondly : *He might have a safe anchorage.* If a mariner, overtaken by the fiercest tempest that ever thundered over the sea, could find an anchorage strong enough to hold his vessel firm, would he not outlive the fury of the hurricane ?

Though not a sailor, I myself have been impressed with the importance of a good anchorage for a vessel in a storm. When a youth of seventeen years of age I left Tenby, my native town, and embarked in a little sloop for Bristol. It was a very small skiff, yet large enough for the trade between the town and that city in those days. It was before the age of steam-packets. In the course of a few hours we reached Worms Head, a place where generally the sea runs high, and in a storm the billows are terrific. Such a tempest overtook us there, that the captain was compelled to return for shelter to Caldy Roads. Caldy is a little island lying about three miles off the town from which we started, and whither as a youth I was accustomed to resort on the Sabbath to teach in a Sunday-school. We dropped anchor there, and being assured we were all safe, retired to our little cabins for rest. Soon, however, we were startled by the terrible intelligence that the chain had snapped and our anchorage was gone. By the skill of the captain and the energy of the crew, composed of three men only, the little skiff was once more brought back to the sheltering spot where the remaining anchor on board was thrown out and struck into the sands. Our terror was once more assuaged, and hope charmed us with the feeling of safety. In a few minutes another furious gust broke our anchorage, and we were hurled out in the depths of a starless midnight to battle with the hurricane and the billows. Oh ! the agony of those hours ! Our only hope now was to give the vessel sea room. For the whole of that long night our little bark was tossed as a plaything on the foaming waters. The phosphorescent froth was our only

light. As morning dawned the storm abated and we returned to the port from whence we had started. Anchorage ! That event has given me an imperishable impression of the importance of good anchorage to seamen in a storm. The soul might have a good anchorage. "Which hope," says Paul, "we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

The strength of this hope as an anchor depends upon two things : —*Upon the greatness of the objects it anticipates : and the certainty of its realization.* If the hope has respect to some *trivial* thing, it has not, of course, much influence upon the mind ; or if it has respect to some great thing, and there be not some *certainty* of the realization, it will not be very influential. But if there be these two things, its power to hold the soul in calmness is complete. Such is the "hope of the gospel." Its object is the highest good and its ground is firm ; it is "within the vail," independent of all the contingencies of time.

Thirdly : *He might have an all-sufficient captain.* In material Navigation the destiny of a voyage depends greatly upon a captain. A man of competent intelligence, of iron will, of self-command, of brave-heartedness, has weathered many a storm that would have shipwrecked inferior men. Souls might have an all-sufficient Captain—One that is *Omniscient*. Christ knows the sea thoroughly, every ripple on its surface, and all that lies beneath in its boundless billows. He knows the stars, "He bringeth out their number, and calleth them all by their names." He knows the winds, "whence they come, and whither they go." He is an *Almighty* as well as an omniscient Captain. He is the master of the elements ; "He holds the winds in His fists, and the water in the hollow of His hands." He who hushed the storm on board the Galilean skiff eighteen centuries ago, has only now to say to the fiercest storms of nature, "Peace, be still," and there would be a great calm. This Captain offers His service to every human soul. With such a chart, such an anchorage, and such a Captain, why should human souls be wrecked ?

CONCLUSION.—We are all voyagers on the sea of life. The ever heaving, swelling, restless sea, rolls beneath us all, and bears us on, and on, for ever. We do not pause a moment—onward before the breeze and the billow we move. But whither ? Are you following the chart ? Have you the anchor of hope ? Is Christ your pilot ? Then climes of imperishable

beauty and immortal fruitfulness await you. You are nearing every hour the goodly land, the land whither all the great and the good have entered. But are you without the divine chart, the divine hope, the divine Captain? Then nothing but ruin looms ahead. You will strike on some rock that will shatter you, or be assailed by some hurricane that will hurl you into the depths of hopeless corruption.



### THE FOREIGN PULPIT.

*Subject: ON THE EXPRESSION OF THE DYING REDEEMER, "It is FINISHED."*

"When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."—John xix. 30.

"*It is finished*"—this expression gives us the clue to the right understanding of the moment in the Redeemer's life at which it was uttered, the moment of death. We will seek, first, to understand the sense and significance of this word as uttered by the lips of the dying Redeemer; and then, upon our side, we will repeat it after Him in faith as our solemn confession. May He Himself be near to us, and may we be conscious thereof.

I. "It is finished," said the Lord, and having said this, He gave up the ghost. What is finished? we naturally asked—a question to which it is not possible to give a simple and complete answer. The object regarded by this expression is of so wide and comprehensive a nature that we can only answer the question by giving a plurality of answers to it, and then only imperfectly. It is most natural to look to the connexion in which the text is found. Let us first of all do this then. "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished." Accordingly we are to look back to something that had occurred before. The preceding sentence is, "After this Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst;" and then some compassionate soldiers gave him vinegar. The expression, "It is finished" would therefore naturally lead us to think before all things of the word of Scripture, the prophecies of Scripture, and

generally of the divine mystery of the redemption of the world, as it had been kept before the eyes of the faithful during ages past. But this answer, though apparent enough, is not exhaustive. What then was proclaimed in these prophecies? The redemption of the sinful world, redemption in its entire scope and reach from sin with all its consequences, and therefore also from all its evils. To this great work, therefore, we have to refer the expression, "It is finished." Yes, the work of redemption, the work which the Redeemer ever regarded as the special life-task set before Him, and which He set forth in the last hour of his fellowship with His disciples as that which the Father had given Him to do, and that which He would completely accomplish—completely inasmuch as He would give Himself for them that they might be sanctified in the truth. This He knew, and this is why He said, "It is finished." It was finished. We know that, assured of this, He promised blessedness to the thief on the cross, and indeed as something immediately before him, when He said, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And let it be added to this, thirdly and finally—this indeed belongs here in the very nature of things—that the Redeemer's own personal glorification was finished too. And of this likewise does He now think. Immediately upon the utterance of our text there follows, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." It is finished; the conflict is at an end; the victor's crown is won; and He who has been obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, is now exalted to the right hand of majesty and has given to Him a name above every name; He is exalted to the heavenly glory, and the temple of this glory which he began to rear in the days of His flesh amid weariness and toil, is finished.

Let this suffice to point out the meaning of the words as they fell from the Redeemer's lips. But we must not overlook the fact that the moment at which they were uttered was altogether remarkable. Recall the circumstances under which they were uttered. He was nailed to the cross as a malefactor, and was expiring when He uttered these remarkable words. Words of triumph, in which the overwhelming sorrow and anguish of soul break forth into jubilee, do not appear to us to be suitable, if He were really such as we are. We should much rather have expected words of complaint, if not of accusation, such as these:—"And so all my toil has been in vain, and shame is the end of

him who wished to glorify his heavenly Father. All in vain have I confided in the word of divine prophecy. In vain have I expected its fulfilment. In vain have I contended with the sins of my brethren, that I might set them free from the power of darkness. In vain have I toiled, notwithstanding that I have toiled with all my powers, notwithstanding that I have been obedient and faithful unto death. I have toiled all in vain, seeking to glorify this wretched life, seeking the outlet into the life that is true, eternal, spiritual, heavenly, and worthy of men." Had we been there we might have thought him right in speaking in such a strain, but we should not have approved of this, "It is finished." Now, indeed, at the distance of eighteen centuries, we can look back to Calvary, and say, that however foolish, judging by appearances, the Redeemer's words might have been regarded, He yet spoke the truth, which has been confirmed by history. This we know now, and are not offended at these words, but let us not forget how much would be implied in such a judgment being formed of them at that time. The words were true then, but what a mind was needed to give expression to them under such circumstances, and at such a time! It is literally true that the prophecies of Scripture were fulfilled when He died; but what an eye must he have had who could see even then that it was so! Did his contemporaries understand the prophecies of Scripture so? Yet before His clear eye the words of prophecy were even at that moment distinct as light. And if any had judged spiritually, and understood them spiritually, they would have found all this in them; but only such as approached Scripture with ideas altogether different from those which Israel entertained, only those who could regard the prophecies from a moral point of view, could know that God's counsel of salvation was fulfilled. It was literally true even at that time that it was fulfilled, that all sin was forgiven; that guilt, and penalty, and judgment were taken away from humanity, though men wished it otherwise; that every evil, and the greatest of all evils, death, had been vanquished, but who understood that as He did whose spiritual eye was open, who could view the redemption and reconciliation with God from a moral point of view, a redemption in which every thing is given to us, not merely forgiveness, but sanctification also! This was possible to Him, and to Him alone. We see from this how soli-

tary He was in His grandeur. It was literally true that He was glorified. A few days afterwards He showed Himself glorified before the eyes of His disciples ; but no man, and the Redeemer Himself is no exception to this, could see the glory with the outward eye. It was only to be seen with the eye of the spirit, and it was with this eye that He saw it who knew that heavenly glory is intimately connected with moral purity.

II. It becomes us then, receiving these words from His lips, reverently to BOW BEFORE HIM, GIVING HIM THE HONOUR AND THE GLORY FOR EVER. But not only so. We must do more than this. This, "It is finished," we must take upon our lips, speaking it after Him as our confession of Him. Certainly this is the natural consequence of our believing in Him. If we believe in Him we must also believe that these words, "It is finished," are truth. The bread of life is given to us, and we have simply to receive and enjoy it. The word of divine prophecy is in reality no longer a word foretelling us of the future ; what our fathers waited for we have. Thoughts of peace are not only, as they were from eternity, "quick and powerful" in our God ; they are fulfilled : salvation has been secured : the work is finished, and we who believe are already redeemed. He has finished His course whom we call our King and Saviour ; He lives, reigns, and has the reins of all things in His hands. Yes, as surely as we believe in Him, so surely must this be our confession. We feel, moreover, that it is not a matter of indifference whether we discharge this duty or no. He is the blessed man who out of a full conviction makes confession of this. If we know that the thoughts of eternal peace are about us in our daily life, shall we be found murmuring ? If we know that our soul's guilt is removed, and that we can look up to our God as children accepted by grace, we are blest with a blessedness which nothing can take away. If we know that the Lord has given us power over sin, and that through the strength which He has given us we can repel sin where it is most formidable, we shall be blessed even amid the hottest conflicts, for we shall know that our faithful friend and loving Saviour is Lord of all.

Surely it is a blessed thing to be able to say all that ! Well, then, who can say it ? It should not be hid from us that how-

ever sweet this is, it is not easy to say it. Perhaps it does not seem hard just now in the public assembly. Perhaps many of you are saying, Who can fail to be conscious that these things are so? Ah, but who does not know that this consciousness is not always ours? Such emotions are fleeting; to-day they blaze, to-morrow they languish and die. Consider, then, that it is hard to make this confession. It may not be a fleeting impression merely. No, it must become natural to us, and this will only be as we become like the Lord in spiritual perception. Our abiding consciousness in all our life should be, "it is finished" in Him, through Him who bowed His head on the cross. Our task is to secure that this conviction, and that which springs from it, should give form and character to our whole life. Let it be your resolve, and He who has finished all things that belong to life and godliness, will confirm you in it.

R. ROTHE,

*Late Professor and University Preacher at Bonn.*

By R. VAUGHAN PRYCE, M.A., LL.B.

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*Subject: CHRIST'S MISSION.*

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."—Matt. x. 34.

CHRIST did not seek to retain His disciples by prophesying smooth things for them, He let them know the worst. That in spite of this, He has attracted such multitudes is a proof of His power. Looking at these words as presenting the aspect of Christ's kingdom to sin, they are literally true, otherwise they conflict with Luke ii. 14.

I. THE STRANGENESS OF THE FACT. This appears when you remember—

First: *The object of Christ's coming.* To establish the reign of peace, to break down every form of oppression, to inaugurate a universal brotherhood among mankind. And its aim in the individual is the same—to bring harmony out of the inner discord.

Secondly: *The law of Christ's kingdom.* "By this shall all

men," &c. (John xiii. 35). Peace might be sought and yet the means of seeking it be calculated to provoke opposition: but very strange that the establishment of a kingdom, whose fundamental principle is *universal* love, should arouse universal hostility. It is love which binds Christians to Christ and to one another.

Thirdly: *The character of the King.* Was there ever a Peacemaker like Jesus? If other peacemakers are the children of God, how much more is he *the Son*. Nothing in His character to provoke hostility, for (1.) There was great power combined with the tenderest love. (2.) He never refused help to the needy; and yet (3.) He never interfered with other people's affairs. "Who made me a judge," &c.

## II. EXPLANATION OF THE FACT.

First: *By the position Christ assumed towards sin.* It was destructive. No truce was possible with Satan. His kingdom was one of love: but strong love implies hatred of the opposite. Christ was pitiful, but this increased His hostility to sin on account of the misery it entailed. Christ's religion was not a charitable indifferentism, but an intensely positive love for the right, and hence it could brook no antagonism—it must be absolute.

Secondly: *By the character of the Gospel.* (1.) It is very simple, and yet professes to accomplish the mightiest deeds—to change the will of man. (2.) The gospel proclaims universal mercy, and yet demands individual acceptance. The world is opposed to this individualism, and hence the tendency to delegate all religious duties to a priesthood to avoid *individual* effort. (3.) The gospel announces pardon as a *free gift*. This clashes with pride. A system which combined these three elements would be certain to provoke hostility in this world as it is.

Thirdly: *By the natural character of men.* Their disposition inclines them to sin, and their innate love of independence leads them to reject a Saviour who demands that we should first acknowledge our own strength to be weakness.

## III. PRACTICAL LESSONS OF THE FACT.

First: *The greatness of Jesus Christ.* He has set the world

on fire. The influence of other world-reformers greatest in their life—His greatest after his death.

Secondly: *The slowness of the progress of the Gospel in the world, and of sanctification in the Believer is accounted for.* Have you known this conflict? If Christ has come to you, He has brought a sword.

C. LANKESTER, B.A.



*Subject: PAUL AND THE GOSPEL.*

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”—Rom. i. 16.

“**I** AM not ashamed.” Paul was a man of like passions with ourselves, and therefore would sometimes be tempted to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. He was keenly sensitive. How he wept with the Ephesian elders: how his soul kindled against Alexander the Coppersmith. He was ashamed of sin: read the dark catalogue at the close of this chapter, from which he turns away his face in disgust. He was ashamed of his own sin, and hence called himself the least of all because he persecuted the saints. He was ashamed of unfaithfulness to the call to higher service, and hence wrote, in bitterness of spirit, “Demas hath forsaken me,” &c. He was ashamed of selfishness, and hence complained that he had no man like-minded with himself, that all sought their own, &c. But he was not ashamed of the Gospel. As well be ashamed of recovery from the plague, of rescue from an untimely grave. How great the joy of the plague-stricken at his unexpected recovery: the Gospel Paul preached was that by which he was saved. Our text speaks—

**I. OF POWER.** “The power of God unto salvation.” Of power—not of man, but of God. The Bible has not much to say about the power of man. He is a glorious being, but in what is possible to him, not in what he actually is—in his capacity. Human nature is capable of receiving into it the Divine fulness, for Christ became a man, and in Him dwelt all the fulness of the

Godhead bodily. When Christ appeared, none believed human nature capable of this: it seemed too great a thought to be entertained that human nature could receive into itself the divine; and there are men who find it hard to believe it still. But so it is. It is the glorious destiny of renewed men to be filled to all the fulness of God.

But apart from Christ and his work, the Bible does not say much about the power of man. It speaks much of his weakness. The history of man has yet to be written, and it must be written by a Paul; and then it will be a history of attempts to attain a condition of safety and blessedness, and of the failures. Men cannot by searching find out God, nor can they find out salvation. Describe the attempts, and the universal failure. Unto man belongeth shame and confusion of face, but unto God belongeth power. He is *able* to save. That is the first thought men need.

II. OF LOVE the text speaks. "I am not ashamed of the *Gospel of Christ.*" It is natural to look to Him who alone can save, to devise the mode; it is unbecoming in us to prescribe. It is natural to suppose that God's scheme of salvation would be in harmony with our nature, and that, if unlike our thoughts of it, it should nevertheless be in harmony with our deepest convictions of what God is—the Unsearchable. We should be prepared to find, then, the mode His own, and beyond the thought of man. Well, what power could do, love has done, and done as the God of love alone could. The Gospel is good news from God in Jesus Christ in relation to that which we most need to know—how we may be one with Him again; in relation to that which we most need to have—love. "We love Him because He first loved us;" there is the source of the light and heat of Christian love. The Gospel of Christ a message of light and love, not of condemnation.

III. A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT our text gives us. "To every one that believeth." What this Gospel, which is God's saving power, requires, man can render—faith. All can believe, or all would not have been required to believe. God has given the faculty, and requires its exercise towards Him. Notice the part faith plays in the public and private life of men. It is as

possible for us to believe in the love of God to us as for the child to believe in the love of its mother, and should be as natural. But we are not obedient children.

IV. A WORD OF UNIVERSAL HOPE our text speaks. "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The day of election has gone by. In Christ salvation has appeared for all who will have it. The Jew pre-eminent, in that salvation is of the Jews; it sprang out of them; it appeared among a people who should have been prepared to receive it, for Christ exactly fulfilled every legitimate expectation of those who held to God, and believed His Scriptures. They were chosen to be the channel through which salvation should flow to the world. They abused their privilege, and lost their pre-eminence. Pre-eminence always implies responsibility—does not always imply excellence.

"And also to the Greek." The highest use of privilege is to be the channel through which the blessings we enjoy flow to others. Some are selected that blessing may come through them to all. The Gospel of Christ is for all, adapted to all, designed for all; all may be partakers. It is well that this is so.

CONCLUSION.—"I am not ashamed," &c. If you are ashamed, there is something wrong. You are unlike Paul. You do not see sin in the light in which Paul saw it; you do not love Christ as he did; you do not live the Gospel as he did; you do not believe concerning the Gospel all that Paul did. Paul thought that all men needed it, and ought to have it, or he would hardly have laboured as he did. Some read the text thus, "I do not distrust the Gospel," &c. It had rescued him; had subdued the bigotry and pride of a blind and interested Jew: what was there it could not do? It should bring every renewed man into the steps of Paul. The motives to life and labour the same for us as for Paul; no greater; no less.

R. VAUGHAN PRYCE, M.A., LL.B.



# The Pith of Renowned Sermons.

RICHARD HOOKER.

*Subject: REMEDY AGAINST SORROW AND FEAR.*

“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”—John xvi. 27.

THE holy Apostles having gathered themselves together by the special appointment of Christ, and being in expectation to receive from Him such instruction as they had been accustomed with, were told that which they least looked for, namely, that the time of his departure out of the world was now come. Whereupon they fell into consideration, first, of the manifold benefits which his absence would bereave them of, and secondly of the sundry evils which themselves would be subject unto, being once bereaved of so gracious a Master and Patron. The one consideration overbalances their souls with heaviness; the other with fear. Their Lord and Saviour, whose words had cast down their hearts, raiseth them presently again with chosen sentences of sweet encouragement. Hurtful things being present do breed heaviness; being future do cause fear. Our Saviour, to abate the one, speaketh thus, “Let not your hearts be troubled,” and to moderate the other, added, “Fear not.” Grief and heaviness in the presence of sensible evils cannot but trouble the minds of men. It may seem, therefore, that Christ requires a thing impossible. Be not troubled. Why, how could they choose? Our grief and heaviness is reprovable sometime, in respect of the cause from whence, sometime in regard of the measure whereunto, it groweth.

I. THE CAUSE OF GRIEF MAY BE REPROVABLE. It is not as the Stoicks have imagined, a thing unseemly for a wise man to be touched with grief of mind; but to be sorrowful when we least should, and where we should lament there to laugh, this argueth on small wisdom.

Thus when the prophet David confesseth of himself, “I was grieved to see the great prosperity of godless men—how they

flourish and go untouched," himself thereby openeth both our common and his peculiar imperfection that such a cause should make any sad. This grief doth rise from error. For no wicked man's estate is prosperous, fortunate, or happy. Their wealth adds nothing to their happiness when not used (Ecclesiastes vi. 2), and where ill used produce all the more wretchedness. And their impunity is supposed, but in no way actual. Hence there is much more cause for the prosperous wicked to bewail their own infelicity than for others to be troubled with their prosperous and happy estate, as if the hand of the Almighty did not, or would not, touch them.

Moreover, when Christ, the life of the world, was led unto cruel death there followed a number of people and women, which women bewailed His much heavy case. It was a natural compassion. Nor was this reprobated; but their blindness was in not discerning that for which they ought much rather to have mourned. Thus the Saviour puts them in mind that the tears which were wasted for Him had better have been spent on themselves. For this cause, and the like unto these, be not troubled.

## **II. THE MEASURE OF GRIEF MAY BE REPROVABLE.**

Even where the cause is just, yet herein our affections may not be yielded unto with too much indulgence and favour. (1.) Grief which our own sufferings bring may give rise to this temptation—*e.g.*, contrition for our sins may lead to despair. (2.) Compassion for others is the least dangerous, yet this may lead us sometimes to spare where we ought to strike.

## **III. SOME REMEDY TO SUCH REPROVABLE GRIEF.**

Here we may notice (1.) *Patience* is a virtue which hath power to stay our souls from being excessively troubled. This patience in suffering and in death is strengthened by remembering ( $\alpha$ ) God registers in the book of life the very meanest details of His servants' experiences; *e.g.*, the meat they desired, the words they spoke, the burial they wished for. ( $\beta$ ) God's care in death. ( $\gamma$ ) The influence of their rightly-borne sufferings over others. Through this it is that sometimes hearts have cried, "O that we might die the death of the righteous, and that our last end might be like his!" (2.) *Fearlessness*. This overcomes the second evil, which in our text warns, "nor fear." We are not of every future evil afraid. For we do not fear what

we are able to withstand : or what we are unable to defer, or to diminish, we cease to fear, but give ourselves over to bear and sustain. Thus we see fear is governable, and may be a sin. ( $\alpha$ ) Because Christ reproves it. "O men of little faith, why are ye afraid ?" ( $\beta$ ) The punishment predicted to the fearful and fainthearted. (Rev. xxi.) But in itself fear is not a sin, for ( $\alpha$ ) in itself it is mere nature, and therefore cannot in itself be sin. ( $\beta$ ) Christ Himself "feared." (Heb. v. 7.) ( $\gamma$ ) Fear in itself is often beneficial. It is a preservative instinct.

In the matter of fear, therefore, we may sin in two ways:—

First : *In not fearing when and as much as we ought.* "Put them in fear," saith the Prophet, "that they may know themselves be men." We are to stand in fear of nothing more than the extremity of not fearing.

Secondly : *In fearing from the wrong causes, or in a wrong degree.* That we may avoid both extremities, and know, as a shipmaster by his card, how far we are wide either on one side or on the other, we must note that to the Christian man there is (1.) *Nature.* (2.) *Corruption* perverting nature. (3.) *Grace* amending and correcting nature. It is nature which teacheth a wise man in fear to hide himself, but grace and faith doth teach him where. Where would the frightened child hide his head, but in the bosom of his loving father ; where a Christian, but under the shadow of the wings of Christ his Saviour ?

URLAH R. THOMAS.



#### COMFORT IN TROUBLE.

I SAY there is comfort, real and deep, in thinking that the path of sorrow we tread has been beaten smooth and wide by the feet of the best that ever trod this world; that our blessed Saviour was a Man of Sorrows, and that the best of His Church have been suffered to journey by no other path than that their Master went. It is not alone that the mourner travels through this vale of tears ; apostles and prophets are of the company ; saints and martyrs go with him ; and the sorrowful face of the Great Redeemer, though sorrowful now no more, remains for ever with the old look of brotherly sympathy to His servants' eyes and hearts. Nothing hath come to us, nothing will come to us, but has been shared by better men. Search out the human being suffering the sharpest sorrow and we can match it in the best of the Church of God.

BOYD.

## Variations on Themes from Scripture.

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*Subject: "OUR FATHER."*

"**W**HEN ye pray, say, Our Father." *His Father and our Father, His God and our God.* To sons of men the Son of Man once said—and in saying it the Son of God recognised them too as sons of God,—“I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you.” It has been affirmed that Christ came to reveal a name—the Father; that He abolished the exclusive “my,” and taught to pray “our Father;” that He proclaimed God the Father—man the son; revealing that the son of man is also the Son of God. “Man—as man, God’s child. He came to redeem the world from that ignorance of the relationship which had left them in heart aliens and unregenerate.” As it is elsewhere put, He revealed God not as the Mechanic of the universe; not the Judge, but as the Father. This is the revelation, that man is God’s child, and the sin of the man consists in perpetually living as if it were false.

David Hume, sceptic alike in metaphysics and theology, remarks in one of his essays, that an invisible, abstract object, like that which natural religion presents to us, cannot long actuate the mind, or be of any moment in life. To render the passion of “philosophical devotion” continuous, we must, he contends, find some method of affecting the senses and imagination, and must embrace some historical as well as philosophical account of the Divinity. On the other hand, the sceptic of a later class maintains that the highest idea of Deity is that of Abstract Right, and that in proportion as it sinks into that of a person, who must necessarily have human attributes, and only thus can become properly an object of love, superstition begins to degrade the idea, and to make of God only an Infinite Egoism. It is with painful interest we read what is written by one, who, not so very long after writing it, discarded not only the Christian creed entire, but all belief in a personal God; written by a suf-

ferer, who, in suffering, thankfully recorded the consolations then abounding in the recognised Fatherhood of God. But for the ideas inspired by Faith, this writer then asserted, there could be no true solace, no endurance but of the low, merely submissive kind. "O ! let the speculative observer of human nature consider well, and observe that human nature to its extremest limits, before he pronounces that our spirits are not created filial. Let him ponder well the universal aspiration towards a spiritually discerned Parent, before he declares the affection a mere venerable superstition." Let him, it is added, feel in health and full action,—or, if he feels it not, let him detect in others—the pausing horror of a sense of orphanhood, beneath which the moral universe falls in pieces under the hand of its myriad builders. And let him, if he himself can but learn what protracted sickness is—as the writer in question most signally had done—"let him ponder well whether a superstition, however early and solemnly conveyed and cherished, could stand the stress—not merely of pain, but of the questionings prompted by pain. Let him say if it can be anything but truth, absolute congeniality with our souls, which can give such all-conquering power to the idea of our filial relation to the Ruler of all things."

M. Rénan asserts the "great act of originality" of Jesus of Nazareth to have consisted in this, that from the first he regarded his relationship with God as that of a son with his father. Neither the Jew nor the Mussulman, this critic goes on to say, "has understood this delightful theology of love. The God of Jesus is not that tyrannical Master who kills us, damns us, or saves us, according to His pleasure." There is nothing in common in Him with the Homeric Zeus, as apostrophized in the "Odyssey."

"O Jove ! for ever deaf to human cries,  
The tyrant, not the father of the skies !  
Unpitous of the race thy will began !  
The fool of fate, thy manufacture, Man,  
With penury, contempt, repulse, and care,  
The galling load of life is doom'd to bear."

*Not the father of the skies. Not ΙΙΑΤΗΡ ημων δὲν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.* The God of Jesus, again to quote from an unbeliever's *Vie de Jésus*, is our Father : we hear Him in listening to the gentle

inspiration which cries within us, "Abba, Father." The God of Jesus, this biographer continues, "is the God of humanity. Jesus was not a patriot, like the Maccabees; or a theocrat, like Judas the Gaulonite. Boldly raising Himself above the prejudices of his nation, He established the universal fatherhood of God. The Gaulonite maintained that we should die rather than give to another than God the name of 'Master.' Jesus left this name to any one who liked to take it, and reserved for God a dearer name. While He accorded to the powerful of the earth, who were to Him representatives of force, a respect full of irony, he proclaimed the supreme consolation—the recourse to the Father which each one has in heaven."

Disbelievers and misbelievers may read a not unwholesome lesson to one-sided orthodoxy. The Fatherhood of God has been practically ignored at sundry times and in divers manners, by austere definers, and refiners of the Sonship. Unitarians, like Dr. Channing, have, therefore, not gone out of their way when insisting, as he did, on this as a central truth, apt to be eclipsed in some theological systems, that God is indeed a Parent, any view of whom, of which love is not the centre, is injurious to the soul which receives it. Religion, as he expounded it, was to be unfolded as a profound, serene love of a Moral Parent. We are habitually to look up to Him "as a spiritual Father and Fountain, as having an infinite interest in the human soul, as desiring its recovery and perfection, as ever present to give His Spirit, and as having sent His Son to manifest Him in this character, and to awaken this faith in His spiritual love." Until this view of God, according to Dr. Channing, takes the place of all others, becomes habitual, becomes associated with His name and every thought of Him, we are ignorant of the full worth and power of Christianity, and can pray but imperfectly. The end of Christianity, as taught by this expositor, is to "awaken faith in God, as the Spiritual, Celestial Father, as the Friend of the soul, as desiring to impart to it a celestial life." In one of his letters the same writer expresses a wish "that the parental character of God might be taught more as a moral relation founded on the affinity of the Divine with the human mind, and having for its end the elevation of the latter to greater and ever-increasing likeness to the former." To him it is, again, that Miss Aikin avows, discussing the doctrine of necessity in one of her letters,

“What I can least afford to part with is the idea of being approved or disapproved by a heavenly as by an earthly parent or superior ; of living ‘as ever in a great taskmaster’s eye.’ It has sometimes overwhelmed my heart with a sense of desolation unutterably oppressive, to think, that by no efforts, no sacrifices, no performance of arduous duties with cheerful patience, it would be possible, if necessity were true, to gain the *moral* approbation of the Deity, without which I could not think of God as a *Father*. Creator I could call Him, and Benefactor, but not Father, that dearest and tenderest of names.” In a subsequent letter to the same guide, philosopher, and friend, the same correspondent is fain to own that so often had she heard, and from the lips of some whom she greatly respected, the axiom, as they represented it, that no evil could exist in the creation of a perfectly benevolent being, if He was also Omnipotent, that her reliance on Providence was “dreadfully shaken” by a vague notion of a nature of things by which Deity itself was limited. But “you have shown me clearly a Father in heaven, and for nothing earthly would I exchange the heavenly peace which this conviction brings.”

Utterances and testimonies like these from beyond the border, or outside the pale, will not the less be accounted worthy of acceptation, if not of all acceptation, by those within it who have had to deprecate a tendency to slight the Fatherhood of the Father, as though He had no love for His children until reconciled to them by His Son. Any such semblance of slight may be implicit only, not explicit ; but it is of practical moment. Practically it goes to exclude direct love to the Father Himself, in favour of the Son, as though there were not perfect harmony of will and purpose between them ; just as in Romanism the extravagance of Mariolatry goes to supersede devotion to both the Father and the Son.

FRANCIS JACOX, B.A.

# The Preacher's Dissecting Room.

“I SPEAK AS TO WISE MEN,”

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

THE position and surroundings of the preacher whose style of work we are to examine to-day, are in the greatest possible contrast, in almost every respect, to those of the last. From the Old World to the New, from Monarchy to Democracy, from Episcopalianism to Congregationalism, from Oxford to New York, from an atmosphere of learned leisure to the most feverish business-mart in the world, from a well-endowed open Cathedral Service to a church where the “sittings” are disposed of by auction—such are some of the changes involved in passing from Henry Parr Liddon to Henry Ward Beecher. The contrast in their discourses is almost as well marked. Except, indeed, that both preachers employ the same mother-tongue in the main, that both are unsparing in their denunciation of what is evil, that both preach from the same book, and both are men of signal power and great reputation, it would be difficult to name another point which they have altogether in common. They even differ, if we may say so, in regard to themselves, the style of the English preacher being always marked by the same earnest, vehement, and yet dignified power; while the manner of the American orator is as purposely diversified as he is able to make it. “Never preach twice alike,” he has himself laid it down in his own authoritative and egotistical manner. “If you preach to-day a descriptive sermon, let next Sunday be an imaginative sermon, and the next a historical sermon. Do not let the congregation know what they are to expect.”

But there are limits to a man's power of variation, whatever his intention: let a singer's compass of voice be as wide as it may, there are notes both above and below, which are out of his reach. You may have one Beecher, therefore, one day in the pulpit, and another very different Beecher the next day, and the day after, another still; but the end of the repertoire, in the nature of things, must be arrived at in due time. Even Mr. Woodin's “Carpet Bag” is not inexhaustible. Not only so, there is a certain family likeness which runs through all its contents; and “W. S. W.” is marked somewhere upon all. In the same way, all the sermons of Mr. Beecher, however

differing from one another, are nevertheless distinguished by his mark : and let us add, by his power.

This intentional diversity, however, makes it, of course, rather difficult to select any one single sermon which shall fully and sufficiently represent him. The sermon which we are now about to remark on is not put forward, therefore, with this view, but only as a means of drawing attention to some of the more prominent excellences and faults of his style. Other points in him, good and bad, it will require another paper to discuss.

The discourse itself, thus selected, is called "Moral Affinity the true ground of Unity," and occurs in a volume of "Sermons" published only last year. It is founded in that passage in Matt. xii. 46—50, which concludes, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." And we notice first, in proceeding to examine it, that it can scarcely be said to possess any formal division, or visible plan, set out at the beginning. So far as we see, in the volume selected from, Mr. Beecher avoids such a thing, as a rule, but it is a kind of proceeding, on the wisdom of which in most hands, we must confess to grave doubts. Of course, it has the obvious advantage of allowing the preacher greater latitude of remark ; he can be more abrupt and discursive when he likes, and, consequently, more unexpected and striking in some of his thoughts and transitions ; but whether such facilities are always correspondingly advantageous to his hearers, who need instruction as well as astonishment, is the point which we question. It is not every pilot who can navigate his ship safely in a channel without buoys ; neither is it every preacher who requires assistance in running away from his subject.

We are very far, however, from meaning to say that the present sermon is really without plan. An altogether methodless sermon is a mere string of vain words—a collection of sentences, like the mob at Ephesus, "which know not wherefore they have come together." Such is not the case here. The preacher begins by adverting to the opinion expressed by some that this answer of Christ's was a rude one, if not harsh and unfeeling ; and points out in reply what he believes to be its true meaning and purport.

"Our Lord, when told that His mother and His brethren stood waiting to speak with Him, felt instantly that there were affinities and relationships far higher and wider than those constituted by the earthly necessities of family life. As it is the mother's and father's *heart* that makes the family dear, as it is the *love* of brother and sister that constitutes true

friendship, and not mere contiguity, or the bare juxtaposition of family life, so the Master, unfolding this idea, and employing the incident as a theme, developed the sublime doctrine of moral unity—of universal relationship founded upon moral affinities.

“It was as if He had said, ‘Truly, she is my mother, and they are my brethren ; but in the higher life, not alone the one who reared me, but every one who is like her, is mine. . . . God is the one Father, and all men become intimately related to each other, in proportion as they are intimately related to God.’”

“Is this a rude reply, which divests the relationships of life of their limitations, and of their feebleness, and exalts them into the spiritual sphere, and there gives to them the purity, the dignity, and the liberty of the Divine nature? This was a complement to true glory. The name mother suggested to Him God—and what praise is there higher than that? Her affection for her son, opened to His thought the universal affection, which, in the final but yet hidden kingdom of God, exists, and shall exist, between all pure natures.”

From this the writer proceeds to describe to us, with considerable analytical care, “the order and tendency of alliances among men”—instancing the “family,” the “school,” the common country ; and so passing to “other alliances playing within these,” such as self-interest, similarities of taste, interchange of kindly services, general goodwill or benevolence, personal affection founded on the recognition of positive excellencies (*sic*), and “common sufferings and common achievements for a noble cause” as the noblest of all. And these “higher affinities,” he lays it down very strongly, “ought to tell on us most—the things which we have in common with God more than the things which we have in common with the animals.”

“‘Who is my mother?’ To be sure, she that bore Him. But cannot a man have more than one mother? In the lower sense—No. In the higher sense—Yes. ‘Who are my brethren?’ They that slept upon the same maternal bosom that I slept upon? Only in the lower relationship are they brethren. But may there not be a higher and spiritual relationship, which shall make those who are like me, or like me in the respects in which I deserve to be loved, my brethren, too?

“There were twelve men, and He called them *mother*. There is no sex known in the higher sphere. That is accidental and earthly, and it passes away. These higher relationships not only are higher in respect to intensity and purity, but they dispossess the mechanical necessities of the lower relationships. All who, like those twelve brethren that follow my footsteps, are seeking day by day to do the will of God—they are my mother.”

All this is very just, and even striking, of its kind. We like to see a great Scriptural truth thus led up to by a careful description of the natural truths which support it ; and we hold it a most important point thus to show that the deeper sayings of Christ only appear to be in opposition to some of our better

thoughts because they are in reality in advance of them. But there are two great dangers which seem to beset a man in such an undertaking ; and from neither of these has our author altogether escaped, as we judge. There is the danger of being more philosophical than Scriptural ; of giving so much attention to the buttresses that the building is neglected ; and of showing so much of the approaches to the mansion in the picture that the mansion itself is dwarfed or concealed. And there is the danger, also, in endeavouring to be comprehensive and wide, of becoming indefinite and obscure. In advancing to the position already adverted to, and in the deductions which Mr. Beecher draws from it by way of application, and which from the other and larger half of his sermon, we see something of this evil. There is a very large use of abstract terms and expressions, much eloquent declamation and description, many fine things which we greatly admire, together with some unworthy ones which we regret as much ; but the impression left on our minds is only a misty one at the end. Take, for example, the first head of application, of which we give a good part, both on this account and also as a fair illustration of Mr. Beecher's manner and power :—

“It is the real and proper tendency of all moral affections to seek each other and to coalesce. The lower feelings and the mechanical feelings of life are, to a certain extent, centrifugal. They fly away from each other. Policy, and self-interest, and conceit, and dogma, and ordinances, and administrations, and gifts, in our lower life, are perpetually separating men. Policies are necessary ; self-interest within due bounds, is right ; dogma is indispensable ; ordinances are appointed ; administration and gifts are rational, and are justified by their use ;\* nevertheless they are all instruments, and they all belong to the hand, not the heart. They are low down, and experience shows that men who live in those things are apt to idolize them in such a way that the very instruments of education, by which God meant the world to be improved, and being improved, to grow together, are divisive influences. They separate men ; they sift men and sort them, and keep them apart.

“Why are men looking with the cold eye of rebuke upon each other but that they go to different churches ? Why do men refuse to clasp hands with most cordial sympathy ? They differ as to ordinances. The ordinance itself is but a shadow and a type. It merely represents a moral thing. They agree in the moral feeling, as well as in the desire to conform to God's wishes ; but they differ in the external form.

“It is as if there should be among printers different sects, one of these sects making the letter Q with a long tail, and the other with a short one ; one sect having the type cut to one shape, and the other to another ; one sect making the types so that they drop low down, and the other so that they are chugged far up, as if these peculiarities were essential. It is as if, these sects existing, each should argue for and defend the particular shape of his own type.

“Now, types are very useful. Some are better than others. The poor-

\* Does he not rather mean “reasonable, or justified by their usefulness” ?

est one is good enough : (?) and the best one is *only* a type after all. They are mere instruments; and men have too-much sense to quarrel about them. It is only when they leave types, and forms, and mechanical arrangements, which are useful in the lower sphere, and come to these elements of religious observance, that they begin to set themselves up upon particulars, and points, and minute subdivisions ; and divide, and affiliate, and readjust their relations; and altogether lose sight of the common parentage, the common aspiration, the common home, and the common heaven, and drive themselves asunder on earth, unsocially, not only, but too often pugnaciously.

“ The only and true union among men in matters of religion is to be found in the direction of the truth of our text. . . . It is to be found in this direction, and in no other. . . . All attempts to coerce a union, to compromise a union, to reason men into an external union, have failed. . . . A mere gathering together of all Christians, as it were, under one comprehensive government, would be utterly useless, utterly worthless, if you could get it. But it is impossible, and you never will get it, thank God. (!)

“ Yet how many associations, how many tracts, are employed, now, to bring the whole Church of God on earth into one external, material, lower union ! The Oriental Church wants everything to be Greek : and the Western Church wants everything to be Roman ; and the Protestant Church wants everything to be Protestant. The Pope, in his great benignity and kindness—and I believe that he meant well—has offered, previous to the great council that is about to assemble in Rome, to open the doors, and invite back all the wandering children. Bless his heart, we are back. We love God, and he does not do anything more than that. The Pope is my brother, and I am his, although he will not own me. It cannot be helped.”

There is much more of the same nature, and—the comical touches excepted, of which more by and bye—in the same arresting and musical strain. And yet the music of which it reminds us, is not so much the music of a definite tune, as that of an introduction or prelude, which, with many fine effects and striking transitions, is so far from satisfying the ear, that it only prepares it, and stirs it up to seek more. It is easy to declaim against minutiae—against treating petty things as great ones—easy to warn us against “ idolising ;”—easy to show the worse than emptiness of mere mechanical and material union ; but, when we have done it all, what results ? We have “ plentifully declared the thing as it is ;” and we have indulged in a certain amount of “ broad talk,” which no reasonable hearer, indeed, can object to, but which every unreasonable hearer can translate very much as he will. A true artist, in our judgment, should have aimed at very much more. He should teach us to what extent the “ lower feelings ” are “ centrifugal,” where proper esteem of them terminates, and where “ idolatry ” of them commences : and should also go into the question (as the phraseology of the text, indeed, indirectly but strongly invites him) as to whose “ will ” it really is we are supposed to fulfil. The God we

worship, it must never be forgotten, exists, in one sense, in ourselves. It is by the conception of God which we have in our hearts that our conduct is determined. Consequently, if our conceptions of God are different, our obedience to the *name* of God will rather separate than unite. To omit such counter-balancing considerations as these, is to be more of a pleader than a judge: and, if a preacher regards his hearers as a jury to be dazzled and amused, rather than as a body of men to be assisted in coming to a practical conclusion on a great and important subject, is a kind of practice of which he may condescend to make use. But the pulpit is not the place for operations of this description; and Mr. Beecher's pulpit especially should be above anything of the sort.

MATHEMATICUS, M.A.



## Biblical Criticism.

Subject: HEBREWS vi. 4—6.

*Toις ἀπαξ φωτισθέντας*, persons once enlightened. *Φωτίζω*, which belongs to later Greek, literally denotes to emit light, to shine, and also to cast light upon something so as to bring it to the knowledge of men. In the common Greek it is only applied to objects in the sense of illustrating them, but in Hellenistic Greek it is applied to persons in the sense of instructing them. Both the Septuagint and Aquila frequently employ it as the equivalent of *הִגַּד*, which signifies to direct, to guide, to instruct; and thus it acquired the acceptance mentioned. See Ps. xxiv. 8, xxxi. 8; xxv., xxxii. This meaning occurs repeatedly in the New Testament, as in John i. 9, Eph. i. 18, iii. 9, Heb. x. 32; and without a doubt it is the true acceptance in the passage before us. For a long period prior to the Reformation it was the almost universal opinion, that both here and in Heb. x. 32, *φωτισθέντας* signified persons baptized. But this is a patristic and not an apostolic use of the word. In the Fathers the verb signifies (1) to instruct with a view to baptism, and (2) to administer the rite of baptism itself. (See Suicer, Thes. ii. 1491.) Even the Syriac version exhibits this sense. But though it is very likely that the change of meaning might originate in the practice of imparting instruction preparatory to baptism, yet in the New Testament the word only means

enlightened with the light of knowledge. So in Eph. iii. 8, Paul says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see *καὶ φωτισθαι πάντας*, and to instruct all, or to teach all, what is the fellowship of the mystery," etc. *Φωτισθέντας*, therefore, undoubtedly denotes persons instructed in the doctrines of the Gospel, persons illuminated with the light of truth. The word occurs another time in this epistle (x. 32), when the relation in which it stands to what goes before it shows that it is used as synonymous with the expression in ver. 26 : *τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπιγνώσιν τῆς ἀληθείας*.

*Ἄπαξ* is a favourite word in this epistle, where it occurs more frequently than in all the rest of the New Testament. It does not mean "once" as preparatory to a second time, but rather expresses the idea of "once for all." So in chap. x. 2, "Because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin." "*Ἄπαξ φωτισθέντας*, "once enlightened," therefore, seems to imply such a knowledge of the Gospel, such a view of its beauty and suitableness, and authority, as, if once extinguished or voluntarily abandoned, does not admit of restoration or resumption. However, it must be observed that *ἄπαξ* does not qualify *φωτισθέντας* only, but all the participles that follow; and therefore we are not warranted to conclude that any amount of mere knowledge, dissociated from the other features, ever entails the awful doom of perpetual exclusion from the possibility of repentance. The several things that are described must concur, and then, if there be apostasy, the case admits of no remedy. Having once been, the experiences mentioned can never be again. "*Ἄπαξ* stands in contrast with *πάλιν* in ver. 6.

Connected with *φωτισθέντας* is the clause *γευσαμένος τε τῆς δωρεᾶς ἐπουρανίου*, and have tasted the heavenly gift. What is this heavenly gift? Faith is the gift of God, and so is Christ, and so is the Holy Ghost; and to each of these may the epithet heavenly be applied with the utmost propriety. Accordingly, there have been interpreters who have sought the reference of the apostle's language in each of these directions. The Lord's Supper, too, has been conceived to be the gift in question, on the ground apparently of the primary physical acceptation of *γεύσασθαι*. But the question is not, what things may be justly designated heavenly gifts? but, what does it best comport with the apostle's argument to suppose him here to mean? His language is very general. It is not precise enough to mark out faith, or Christ, or the Holy Ghost, or the Eucharist, or pardon, or peace of conscience, or salvation, not to mention other ob-

jections to each of these expositions. Let it be observed that the several parts of the description are differently connected together, some by *καὶ* and some by *τέ*. Now the former of these conjunctions marks a wider step than the latter; *καὶ* associates the greater divisions or parts, and *τέ* the subordinate members. The clause before us, therefore, must take its hue from the one that precedes it. The two form one great member of the whole sentence; and therefore it seems the most probable supposition, that the heavenly gift is just the truth that enlightens, the light of Christian knowledge. As no description of the gift follows, the article *τῆς* must be supposed to look back to something that has already been indicated, which can only be the knowledge of the Gospel comprehended in *φωτισθέντας*. And we know that Christ Himself described the knowledge of the truth as the gift of God; for He said to the Samaritan woman, “If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee *living water*” (John iv. 10). Delitzsch argues, that what is coupled by the conjunction *τέ* must not only be something subordinate to the main preceding member, but something that results from it; therefore not the truth which is the cause of illumination, but rather pardon, God’s favour, justification, salvation in Christ; and he fixes upon this last idea—salvation in Christ. But the objection already urged against the other interpretations is decisive against this one also, viz., that the language is too indefinite to express any one of these ideas. Besides, Delitzsch’s own argument is misapplied; for although it is quite true that *φῶς* is not a consequence of *φωτισθέντας*, but a cause, yet the idea expressed by the whole phrase, *γενσαμένους*, enjoying the light, is a resulting effect, and is most properly appended by means of *τέ*. Nor let it be said that this interpretation loads the passage with tautology; for the one clause expands the thought of the other, and not only describes an augmented degree of Christian knowledge, but pleasure in the possession of it. The idea to be attached to *γενσαμένους* is of great importance to the right understanding of this passage. This word has been supposed to mean here, taste, lightly or partially, as with the mere tips of the lips; and many expositors of the Reformed Church, concerned about the doctrine of the saints’ perseverance, have pertinaciously adhered to this idea. But it rather means tasting in the sense of partaking, receiving fully and copiously. This is obvious, from the use of the word in chap. ii. 9, where it is applied to our Lord’s tasting of death, which certainly does not mean that He had only the slightest touch of suffering, but rather that He felt the full

bitterness of dying. We cannot suppose the apostle to mean, that persons who have had ever so slight a taste of the heavenly gift, whatever you suppose it to indicate, cut themselves off, when they fall away, from all hope of restoration. The idea of amplification manifestly enters into the whole passage. It is not the smallness, but the greatness, of the attainments and privileges which apostates have enjoyed, which constitutes the ground of their tremendous doom, and which the apostle must be supposed here solicitous to exhibit. As the first clause, then, expresses generally the idea of acquaintance with the truths of religion, so the second, connected by *τέ*, superadds the idea of enlarged and earnest study of the truth, and great pleasure in contemplation of it.

WILLIAM LINDSAY, D.D.

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## The Preacher's Finger-Post.

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### THREE GREAT THINGS IN HUMAN LIFE.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."—Psa. cxix. 11.

In these few words there are three great things.—A great revelation—a great act—and a great purpose.

I. A great REVELATION. "Thy word." A word is a revelation of intelligent moral mind. The value of a word depends upon the intellectual and moral worth of the mind it expresses. The words of thoughtless men are wind and nothing more. The words of corrupt men are the channels of impurity. The words of the holy and the strong are amongst the most elevating forces in society. Great souls incarnate themselves in words

and live and work here long after the tongue that uttered them or the hand that wrote them are crumbled into dust. But what is a human word compared with the Word of God? The revelation of a mind infinitely wise, immaculately holy, boundlessly loving and almighty in strength. This word we have here, and it is given us in order to work our spiritual renovation, and to restore us to the moral image of its author. There is nothing under these heavens so valuable to man as this word. What are the criteria by which men determine the value of things? (1) Scarcity, (2) usefulness, (3) judgment of competent authorities, (4) duration. Try this word by any of these criteria, and its value will

be found to transcend all power of appreciation.

II. A great ACT. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart." There are many wrong uses of this word. (1.) The infidel uses it in order to throw doubt upon its contents, invalidate its authority and caricature its discoveries. (2.) The sectarian uses it in order to sustain his own crotchets and justify his own exclusiveness. (3.) The worldly-minded uses it in order by writing or preaching, or profession, to promote his secular gains and advance his social influence. Sadly have men in all ages abused this word, and sadly do they abuse it now. What is the *right* use of it? *To hide it in the heart.* Many men have it in the intellect in the memory in passing emotions, but what is needed is the hiding of it in the heart. Put it there as leaven in the meal to ferment, permeate through the mass, and transform all to its own character. Hide it as golden grain in the soil that it may germinate and grow, and produce abundant fruit. It is a wonderful thought that God has given man the capacity to take into his nature the word, and profoundly solemn is the thought that it is only as he takes in this word into the depths of his nature and hides it there that he can reach a happy destiny.

III. A great PURPOSE.  
"That I might not sin against

Thee." First: *Sin is a terrible evil.* There is nothing worse in the universe than sin. It is worse than hell, for it is the cause and spirit of it. Sin is a battling with Omnipotence, an outrage of our constitution, an opposition to the order of the universe, a plunging of our being into darkness and woe. Secondly: *There is a propensity in man to fall into this evil.* This is implied in the words, and this alas is true to all history universal. Experience and our own consciousness. Thirdly: *God's word in the heart is the efficient counteractive.* The author of these words not only deprecated sin, felt his liability to it, but felt that the Word of God in his heart would secure him. The Word of God is in eternal antagonism to all sin, and beside there is no power on the earth that can remove it from mankind,

CONCLUSION. — What art thou doing with this word my brother? It has come to thee. Thou hast it in thy hand, and many of its facts and doctrines are in thy memory. Hast thou taken it down into thy heart, as the holy power to cleanse the very fountains of thy being? Has it entered thee as the only agent that can rectify the disordered mechanism of thy nature?

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## PROGRESSIVE POWER OF THE GOSPEL OVER THE SOUL.

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."—1 Thess. i. 5.

WITHOUT offering any preliminary remarks in explanation of the scope of the epistle, or of the meaning of the context, we shall use these words to indicate the *gradual stages* by which the Gospel accomplishes its perfect work in the human soul.

I. It comes as a "WORD." "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only." It first came to them in the word of Paul and Silas. (Acts xvii. 4.) The Gospel first comes to all men in this "word" form. First: The Gospel has a *written word*. It is in the written biography of Christ, and in the epistles of his apostles. In this written form it is suggestive, diffusive, permanent. Secondly: The Gospel has a *spoken word*. From the days of Christ to this hour there have been men who have felt moved to speak this word with their living voice to their fellow-men. The Gospel has a living ministry. We can all say, the Gospel has come to us "in word," both written and spoken. The next stage is—

II. It comes as a "POWER." "But also in power." The sound passes into energy. First: Its power is felt in the *region of thought*. Old notions are disturbed; new ideas are started, and strange questions mooted.

Secondly: Its power is felt in the *region of emotions*. Conscience is touched, hope and fear are excited. There is a stir in the realm of feeling. The dead lake is lashed by the tempest. The next stage is—

III. It comes as a *DIVINITY*. "And in the Holy Ghost." The spirit of God goes with it now. There is the "demonstration of the Spirit." This spirit *begets faith*. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the spirit of God." The Spirit works by the gospel in this stage to enlighten, cleanse, quicken, and energise the soul with new life. It brings order out of chaos and life out of death, and beauty out of hideous ruin. It builds up the ruined temple of the soul, and becomes its permanent divinity. The last stage is—

IV. It comes as an "*ASSURANCE*," "and in much assurance." All doubts now are dissipated, all scepticism dispelled; the soul is rooted, and grounded in the faith. "There are all the riches of the full assurance of understanding." The soul is strong in faith, giving glory to God. It says, "I know in whom I believe." Exultingly it exclaims, "who shall separate me from the love of God," &c.

CONCLUSION.—In which of these stages is the Gospel in relation to us? It has come to us in *word*. The word is in our hands, on our ears, in our memory, and on our lips. But

if it remains in this stage, it is of no real service to us. It has come to us in *power*, too. We have all felt it more or less, felt it both in the circle of our thoughts, and in the region of our feelings. But if it continued in this stage, it has done us an injury rather than a service. Thousands have felt its power who are now in hell. It has come to some as a *divinity*. The Holy Ghost has come with it and by it effected the redemptive work. But still in this stage, whilst the benefit is great, it may not be complete. Doubts and fears may still lurk in the soul. It has come to a few as an assurance. They have "full assurance of faith." Why should not the Gospel come thus to us all ? For this it is sent.

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**MARTYRDOM A TESTIMONY.**

"I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God."—Rev. xx. 4.

MARTYRDOM is the subject of these words. An examination of the whole vision here recorded is very tempting, and would be interesting, but is not practicable in this place. The words suggest four facts concerning martyrdom.

I. *Martyrs are SOMETIMES MURDERED MEN.* John saw the souls of those who "were beheaded." All murders are not martyrdoms; all martyrdoms are murders. There has often been martyrdom, and

still is, where there is no killing. There are sufferings inflicted on men on account of their conscientious convictions that are often as bad, if not worse, than death itself. There is slander, contumely, the loss of freedom, the destruction of rights. For a man to spend his life amidst social scorn, civil disabilities, and religious intolerance, on account of his conscientious beliefs, is a martyrdom, his life is a protracted and painful dying. But thousands have been murdered, and that by every variety of method which satanic cruelty could invent. Paul summarises some of the tortures of ancient martyrdom,—"Some had trials of cruel mocking and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder; were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

II. *Martyrs are ALWAYS WITNESSING men.* "Beheaded for the witness." Indeed, the word martyr means a witness. All witnesses are not martyrs, but all martyrs are witnesses. The man who dies on account of conscientious beliefs, whether they are right or wrong, bears witness to several things. First: *To the invincibility of the human will.* The ablest metaphysical works cannot give you

anything like the impression of the freedom and the force of that power in man which we call will, as one martyrdom. The martyr rises up against the powers of the world, and dares it to do its utmost. Secondly : *To the force of the religious element.* When religious convictions get hold of a man's soul, whether the convictions are right or wrong, they invest him with an unconquerable power. The stake, the faggot, the fire, have no power to crush or subdue him. Thirdly : *To the power of the soul over the body.* Men who have had their souls filled with religious feeling become physically insensible to all the tortures and fires of martyrdom ; they have sung in the flames. I say that a martyr, whether his religious convictions are right or not, is a mighty witness to these things.

III. *Martyrs are often Christian men.* Those whom John saw were those who were "witnesses of Jesus, and for the word of God." We say often Christian men, for false religions as well as the true have had their martyrs. Who but God can tell the number of men that have been put to death on account of their fidelity to Jesus and the Word of God ! In the first ages under Nero, Domitian, and Trajan, Christians were slain by thousands, and who but God knows the number of those whose blood in Christian Europe has been shed on account

of their attachment to Christianity ? These *Christian* martyrs were witnesses of something more than the invincibility of the human will, the force of the religious element, and the power of the soul over the body. First : *They bore witness to the sustaining grace of Christ.* In the midst of their torturing agonies they gloried in their attachment to Him. Their grim persecutors, when endeavouring to extort from them recantation of their faith, were answered in the same spirit as that expressed by the ancient martyr, *Sanctus*, "*Christianus sum.*" They all gloried in tribulation, &c. They endured joyfully the spoiling of their goods, &c. Secondly : *They bear witness against the lukewarmness of living Christians.* The martyrs were earnest men. Cranmer at the stake publicly denounced his own unfaithfulness. How bitterly he repented of his recantation ? In the midst of the flames he said what troubled his conscience was, "that for fear of death he had written with his hand contrary to the truth which he thought in heart. And, *therefore* (cried the old man, in the holy violence of zeal), *my hand shall be punished first.* If I may come at the fire, it shall be first burnt !" At the stake, accordingly, he stretched out his hand, which was distinctly seen to be burning alive, and cried, "*This hand hath offended !*"

**IV. Martyrs who are Christians ENTER HEAVEN.** John now saw the "souls of these who were beheaded" raised to immortality, and invested with imperishable dignities. Men whom the world considered unworthy to live, but of whom the world is not worthy, are welcome into the Paradise of God. This fact should act, First: *As an encouragement to the persecuted Christian.* Secondly: *As a warning to persecutors.* How much greater was Stephen than all the members of the persecuting Sanhedrim! How angelic his countenance! how calm his spirit! how peacefully he passed away into the serene heavens of love!

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**SKETCHES FROM GENESIS.****LOT'S WIFE.**

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."—Gen. xix. 26.

**HERE we meet with—**

**I. A CHARACTER HIGHLY BLESSED.** First: *Association with good people.* For a considerable number of years she had been in the company of Abraham and Sarah—good people. Lot, her husband, too, with all his faults, is represented as "a righteous" character, and his present rescue by the angels from ruin proves this. Good results ought to be produced upon individual characters who have the privilege of mixing in the company of the morally pure. God intends it should

be so—"Ye are the salt of the earth"—your moral influence is to be to the general welfare. Evil doers ought to thank God that some of His children are living on the earth. Secondly: *Remarkable interpositions of Providence on her behalf.* Lot and his family were taken prisoners when the four kings waged war against Sodom, which, when Abraham knew, he went to their assistance, and succeeded in rescuing them from their oppressors. This interposition of God on her behalf, together with the present leading out of Sodom, were blessings which ought to have left good and lasting impressions on her mind. God in all the events of His providence is very near unto man, and the consideration of this should make us submissive to His will, and anxious to spend the life to His praise and glory. Thirdly: *Divine aid afforded to escape the danger.* Not only the angels had communicated the approaching judgment, but had also taken hold in her hand, and led her out of the city. All who perish throughout our land have had the offer of Divine assistance; Christ has died, the plan of salvation accomplished "a new and a living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh," has been opened to all.

**II. A CHARACTER INEXCUSABLY WRONG.** First: *Inasmuch as sin in its most detestable*

forms had been presented to her view. She had resided long enough in Sodom to have a clear knowledge of the wicked character of its inhabitants ; and now her heart ought to have rejoiced at the prospect of leaving the place forever, and of breathing a purer moral atmosphere. No man can plead his ignorance of sin ; it is daily visible in some form or other ; the conscience condemns it, and the cross of Christ reveals it in all its baseness and destructive tendencies. Secondly : *Inasmuch as a special commandment was disregarded.* "Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee," &c. Our state is probationary, special, and particular commandments given to test our fidelity to God. "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," do not exclusively belong to the old, their voice is heard under the new dispensation as well ; and those who transgress them have no excuse to offer for their conduct. Thirdly : *Inasmuch as there was no reasonable inducement to disobey.* Her husband and daughters were with her, nothing of any real value was left behind. There can be no real inducement for man who is immortal, and endowed with almost infinite capabilities, to put forth all his energies to acquire earthly wealth and renown, because he will soon have to part with them all.

III. A CHARACTER SADLY PUNISHED. First : *Separated from the objects of her hope.* The lingering look behind shows that the heart was still at Sodom, and the sudden judgment separated her for ever from her hope. What a blessing hope is ! It has illumined the darkness of many a life, and removed the heavy burdens which pressed the soul almost to the ground. This is lost to the wicked in death. Secondly : *Held forth as a warning to others throughout the ages.* Her history is a monument erected in the Divine record to warn others of their danger when disobeying the commands of heaven. To have a suspicious character during one's life is to be deplored, but how much more so when the character after his death is handed down to posterity as one to be hated ! Thirdly : *Lost almost within reach of safety.* Sodom had been left ; Zoar in sight, but lost. After having resolutely and successfully fought against many fierce tempests during a long voyage, to be wrecked in sight of land is very distressing to the feelings. Eternal life has been brought nigh unto us, but thousands perish because they will not stretch forth their hands to lay hold on it.

CONCLUSION. "Remember Lot's wife."

*Uckfield.*

*Cymro.*

# Seeds of Sermons on the Book of Proverbs.

## SOCIAL ANGER.

"A gift in secret pacifieth anger, and a reward in the bosom strong wrath."—Prov. xxi. 14.

THE subject of these words is *social anger*. Next to the evil of having anger burning as a flame in our *own* hearts, is to have it existing in the hearts of others toward us. To have a man within the circle of your social life crying out in the language of Shakespeare—

"O, that the slave had forty thousand lives :  
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge !  
I would have him nine years a killing."

is a terrible calamity. The verse leads us to consider this anger in two aspects.

I. AS UNRIGHTEOUSLY PROVOKED. The anger spoken of here is an anger that ought not to have been excited, otherwise its pacification would not be referred to as proper and desirable. There is a righteous excitation of anger in the minds of our contemporaries. When we rouse indignation because we deal out honest reproofs, expose corrupt motives, and thwart immoral schemes, we are not chargeable with any blame on account of the anger ; Christ Himself set the souls of the men about Him aflame with indignation. But when by an *unjust* impugning of motives, a slanderous expression, a false charge, or a dis honourable act, we awaken anger, we are justly blameable for its existence, and we are bound to use every justifiable means to put an end to it. We

should not allow the fire to burn on without efforts for its extinction.

II. AS GENEROUSLY OVERCOME. "A gift in secret pacifieth anger : and a reward in the bosom strong wrath." What kind of gift can put out the flame of anger ? First : It must be obviously *disinterested*. If I present the most costly gift to my enemy in order to appease his wrath, unless he sees convincingly that the gift is free from all selfishness and fear, and perfectly disinterested, he may accept it and be silenced by it, but his anger will be unsubdued. Love alone can overcome anger. The waters to quench the fires of revenge must be drawn from the fountains of a loving heart. Secondly : It must be obviously *unostentatious*. It must be "a gift in secret"—"a reward in the bosom." A gift loses its moral value, its moral power as an atonement, when it is offered in an ostentatious spirit. It is an instinct of virtue to shrink from parade : it wishes to make itself known by silent deeds, not by trumpet sounds.

CONCLUSION.—Do not let anger which you have unrighteously excited burn on in human breasts without earnest effort for its extinguishment, for verily anger is a terrible thing. "If you look into this troubled sea of anger," says good old Thomas Adams in his quaint way, "and desire to see the image of a man, behold you find fiery eyes, a faltering tongue, gnashing teeth,

a heart boiling in brine, and drying up the moisture of the flesh till there be scarce any part left of his right composition."

"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat: and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee."

#### MORAL CONTRAST.

"It is joy to the just to do judgment; but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity."—Prov. xxi. 15.

Here is a twofold contrast.

I. A contrast in CONDUCT. First: Here is a *doing of judgment*. "It is joy to the just to do judgment." The whole of man's duty may be comprehended in two words—do justice. Do justice to *yourself*, respect your own nature, train your own faculties, promote your own rights. Do justice to *society*—"whatever ye would that men should do unto you do even so to them." Do justice to your *Maker*—"render unto Him the glory due unto His name." Secondly: Here is a *working of iniquity*. "Workers of iniquity." This is the very opposite conduct to the former. To work iniquity is to act in opposition to all the duties we owe ourselves, society and God. All men on earth are found pursuing one of these two courses: all are doing the just or the unjust. Here is—

II. A contrast in DESTINY. First: Here is *blessedness*. "It is joy to the just to do judgment." "Virtue is its own reward." As heat issues from the fire, and light flows from the sun, joy springs from righteous doings. The ways of rectitude are ways of pleasantness and peace. Every

true act of justice swells the melody of the heart's true joy. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Secondly: Here is *ruin*. "Destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity." "Destruction" of what? Not of existence, not of consciousness, not of moral obligations, but of all that can make existence happy. The "workers of iniquity" are working their ruin. Destruction and misery are in their way, and the ways of peace they have not known.

CONCLUSION.—"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

#### HOPELESS APOSTASY.

"The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead."—Prov. xxi. 16.

APOSTASY is of *two* kinds, good and bad. The man who renounces a false creed, or abandons a wrong course of life, is a praiseworthy apostate. But he who renounces the true and the right, is an apostate morally censurable. All sinners in the universe are apostates in this sense, they have forsaken the true and the good. All sin is an apostasy. There are *two* classes of criminal apostates in the universe—those whose condition is hopeless, and those who may yet be restored to the true and the good. Fallen angels, and finally impenitent men, belong to the former class; those who are redeemable by Christi-

anity belong to the latter. The text points us to the *hopeless apostate*.

I. **HIS CONDUCT.** He "wandereth out of the way of understanding." First: *All apostates were once in "the way of understanding."* "The way of understanding" is the way of rectitude, religion, godliness. The Infinitely Holy One never created a soul that He did not put in that way at first. All the lowest fiends in the universe were once in "the way of understanding." To suppose otherwise would be to make God the author of sin. "Lo this only have I found, that God hath made man upright: but they have sought out many inventions." (Eccles. vii. 29.) Secondly: *All apostates are now wandering from that way.* "All we like sheep have gone astray," &c. All sinners are prodigals that have wandered from their Father's house—homeless, benighted, hell-exposed wanderers. They are lost, and every step makes their condition worse. Fallen spirits are stars that have wandered from their orbit, to whom are reserved "the blackness of darkness for ever."

II. **HIS RUIN.** "Shall remain in the congregation of the dead." The word here translated "dead" is elsewhere rendered "giants." But it is also rendered "dead" in many other passages. Parkhurst and most critics consider intensity to be implied in the word, and would represent the idea by the expression "mighty dead." The language implies, First: *Utter ruin.* "Dead." The death of the hopeless apostate is not annihilation, but something in-

finitely worse; it means the wreck of all that can make existence worth having. Secondly: *Collective ruin.* "The congregation of the dead." There is a vast assemblage of ruined souls somewhere in the universe. They are together; yet they have no fellowship, for they lack mutual sympathy and confidence. "Devil with devil damned." What a "congregation!" Who can tell their number? Who can fathom the depths of their anguish? Conscience their preacher, and groans their psalmody. But on this earth is not the vast assemblage of corrupt men, "a congregation of the dead?" Thirdly: *Interminable ruin.* "Shall remain." "Remain"—how long? Will there ever come a period to the misery of their condition? I know not. The following passages are terrible answers to the problem. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. x. 26, 27.) "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." (2 Peter ii. 20.)

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SELF-INDULGENCE A SOURCE OF POVERTY.

"He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich."—Prov. xxi. 17.

SELF-INDULGENCE is prevalent amongst all classes. There is a

strong tendency in all to pamper appetite, and to gratify the flesh. Wealth, where it is possessed, is employed for this purpose. It is used to bring the choicest viands from every shore, and to procure those arts that can please the senses, and charm the imagination. Where it is not possessed, it is struggled after with the hope of its ministering to self-gratification. Self-indulgence is not human happiness : it is a delirium, not a delight. It is a mere titillation of the dying nerves, not a Divine thrill of our imperishable sensibilities and powers. Its music is the notes of a maniac, not the strains of a seraph. The text teaches that this self-indulgence tends to poverty, but how?

I. It involves an **EXTRAVAGANCE OF EXPENDITURE**. A man that "loveth pleasure," and "wine and oil," who gives himself up to self-indulgence, is generally tempted to lavish expenditure of his means. Pleasure is an expensive divinity. It demands the most costly sacrifices. The largest fortunes must often be laid upon its altar. How frequently in our journals do we read of historic families ruined, and lordly estates bartered away, for the mere love of pleasure ! Profligate voluptuousness, with its expensive viands, its luxurious refinements, its costly establishments, and its foolish pastimes, makes light work with fortunes.

II. It involves a **FOSTERING of LAZINESS**. The self-indulgent man becomes such a lover of ease that effort of any kind becomes distasteful and repulsive; the spirit of industry forsakes him, and all his energies sleep in the lap of self-indul-

gence ; and indolence, as Solomon has often told us, and as all history shows, tends to poverty. "He that loveth pleasure, shall be a poor man ; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich." But whilst it is true that self-indulgence leads to *material* poverty, it also leads to a poverty of a far worse description. It leads to *intellectual* poverty. The self-indulgent man, if he reads at all, reads not those productions that inform the judgment, challenge thought and stimulate inquiry, but tales that are the foulest froth of literature. If he thinks, he does not think upon those great subjects that quicken, refine, and enoble the soul, but on those subjects which constitute the gossip of the hour. Consequently, his intellect is pauperized. It leads to *spiritual* poverty. The man who would get his soul strong in holy resolves and righteous principles, must agonize to enter in at the "strait gate" of habitual reflection, holy labour, and earnest worship. This the self-indulgent man will not do.

#### THE WICKED A RANSOM FOR THE RIGHTEOUS.

"The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright."—Prov. xxi. 18.

THE sentiment expressed in these words is God's *special* regard for the interest of His people. He uses even wicked men as a "ransom" for them. The sentiment is expressed elsewhere—"For I am the Lord, thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou

hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." (Isa. xlivi. 3, 4.) "How was Egypt a 'ransom'?" says an able expositor. "Not in the strict and proper sense of the word: but when Israel was to be delivered, and Egypt, the oppressor, stood in the way, the deliverance was effected at the cost of Egypt,—by plagues on her people and land, and the destruction of her armies. Thus, in after times, was the army of Sennacherib sacrificed for the deliverance of good King Hezekiah and his people, when, in the time of their perplexity and peril, they cried unto the Lord. Thus did the plots of the wicked Haman for the destruction of Mordecai and the Jews come back upon himself. In the end, "all the wicked" that have opposed "the righteous," and done what they could to frustrate their salvation, shall become, for their sakes, the victims of the Divine displeasure." The wicked are a "ransom" for the righteous in many ways.

(1.) Their history is a *warning* to the righteous. However secularly grand in life, their end is ever lamentable. "Like sheep they are laid in the grave," &c. They act as beacons to the good. "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree: yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." (Ps. xxxvii. 35.) (2.) Their antagonism is a *test* to the righteous. Principles to grow in purity and strength require testing. As trees require storms to strengthen their roots,

righteous souls require opposition to deepen their hold in truth and God. (3) Their productions are often of *service* to the righteous. The discoveries they make, the arts they invent, the enterprises they accomplish, are often turned by the good to their own account. God makes the wicked serve the good. Whatever the wicked in the midst of their pride and pomp may think, they are mere *sacrifices* for the good and the true. This is God's plan. Several remarks rise out of this fact:—

1. **THE WICKED ARE NOT TO BE ENVIED.** What though they have the wealth and power of the world, they are the mere servants of the righteous; and what is worse, they serve the righteous not only without a will, but *against* their will. Serve them by their very opposition; serve them as Joseph's brothers served him, as the Jewish Sanhedrim in the Crucifixion of Christ served the highest interests of humanity. Do not envy the wicked.

II. **THE GOOD ARE NOT TO BE PITIED.** They may be poor, despised, oppressed; what of that? "All things work together for their good." Heartless despots and proud aristocracies are but spokes in the wheels of that providential chariot which rolls the good triumphantly onward to sublimiter experiences.

III. **THE WORLD'S RULER IS NOT TO BE MISTRUSTED.** He has promised what the purity, the justice, and the love of His character demand, that the saints shall rule the earth one day, that the right with the

might shall prevail. Since He is such a Master of wicked men and even devils, too, as to make them unwittingly minister to the good of His people, shall we doubt Him? Hell itself is an instrument by which He

works out His vast and beneficent designs. The arch-fiend, the head and leader of all wicked principalities and powers, is not only chained to His car, but made to bear it onward according to His Eternal Will.

## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

### SIMILES FROM A PREACHER'S NOTE-BOOK.

*Nature and God.*—Nature is to God, the Spirit of Nature, as speech is to thought: how vain to worship the shadow, and neglect the substance!

*Sorrow and Prosperity.*—Sorrow is the rain God sends, Prosperity the sunshine: both are necessary to produce a healthful spirit,—neither would be sufficient alone.

*Love.*—Love is to our inward human world what the sunshine is to the world of nature: though it might exist without it, it could not live; all would be cold and dead.

*The Light of Heaven.*—The eye which hath gazed on the brighter light than that of the earth, will admire the lights of the earth, but will not be dazzled by them.

*The Winds of the Spirit.*—There are some days in our higher life when the winds of the Spirit seem to blow and waft us leagues towards the heavenly country: these are the strong moments of our existence.

*Clouds.*—A cloud of evil is at present between us and God;

but soon we shall get beyond the cloud, and see His undazzling brightness.

*Power and Love.*—God writes His power with stars upon the sky, but He writes His love with joys upon the heart.

*Little Things.*—The difference between a good statue and an indifferent one is not in the broad outlines, but in the delicate workmanship. So likewise is it between the outward life of the Christian and other men.

*Calm and Commotion.*—Sometimes God leadeth us through His green pastures and beside His still waters. But not always. The roads and the cities of life are for man's business. The fields are for the growth of verdure, not for his dwelling.

*Walking on the Sea.*—God often leads the Christian down the shore to the borders of the sea: it is his duty to go straight forward, and walk upon it. Faith can enable him to do even this.

*Forms and Life.*—Forms without life are worse than useless: like wings sewn on to a bird they not only do no good, but they are really a hindrance to the spirit's flight. They need

to be united to the body by a band of vitality to be of use.

*Darkness.*—Darkness brings stars to view, and sorrows reveal Divine consolations. The more intense the darkness, the greater is the number of stars visible; and so the more intense our troubles, the more consolations should appear.

*Life's End.*—God can make the chamber of death to be only the robes room for the palace of immortality.

*Dark Lives.*—Some lives which have been all gloomy become clear just before they close, as we often see days of heavy rain followed by a brilliant sunset.

*The Sea and the River.*—Let the wrong of the past be as a spent billow of the sea: let the good of the future be strong and calm as a summer river.

*Righteousness.*—It is a good thing when the clouds break, and a man can look down into the abysses of righteousness. He sees then his own imperfection, and how small a portion of the wisdom of holiness he really possesses.

*Trouble.*—If you want a strong oak tree you do not build a glass house over it, but you let the blasts of heaven blow round it: if it is weak and worthless it will die, but if it is tough and vigorous it will live. So too, if you want a real Christian man, of full stature and worthy strength, you must let him taste of trouble as well as of prosperity: this is how God is disciplining all those whom He receives as His children.

*Holiness.*—It takes us years to climb the mountains of holiness, but through carelessness we may fall as much in one

minute as we have ascended in many months.

*Light of Heaven.*—When a Christian enters the Valley of the Shadow of Death, he sees the light of glory shining in front of him before he loses sight of the twilight of this world.

*God's Light.*—Sometimes God sets the soul on fire with His love, by striking sparks out of the flinty heart; at other times he lights it up with the sunshine of His presence.

*Belief and Practice.*—A correct theology and a correct practice are as necessary to perfect spiritual life, as a perfectly developed body and soul are to the natural.

*Roughness.*—The earnest teacher is often rough: God does not polish the bark of the oak tree.

*Imperfect Christians.*—Many Christians are such a mixture of good and evil that they resemble a temple, overgrown with moss and mildew, and choked with rank, bitter weeds.

*Sin's Scars.*—The soul may be discoloured and scarred by guilt, so that it can never be pure and beautiful again on earth, though the wounds are healed and the sins forgiven.

*Waters of Sorrow and of Passion.*—The waters of sorrow are like the waters of irrigation: the field only wants the sunshine of the spring to bear a glorious crop. But the waters of passion are like the waters of a flood; instead of enriching, they sweep all before them.

*Twilight or Dawn* (from the German).—Is life to be the evening twilight before an eternal night? Or the morning dawn before the eternal day?

*Floating with the Stream.*—It is easy to float down the stream of religion with the current : it is only when we get upon some shoal or mudbank that we find out how little real strength we have.

*Brightness.*—Christianity comes to us in our troubles as the sunshine to the cold rain-drops, converting them into a myriad gems reflecting the eternal light.

*The Alphabet.*—We learn the letters and words of the Christian language here ; we shall not have to unlearn them in the world above, only to acquire the power of using them perfectly.

*A Stifling Atmosphere.*—You may go into a room with so stifling an atmosphere that at first you can scarcely breathe, and cannot imagine how any one can live in it ; but at length even you get used to it. So is it with evil ; if it be not fled from, though at first it is dreaded, it becomes before long so natural, so much a part of ourselves, that we scarcely perceive it.

*Worldly Cares.*—Worldly cares, like the large stones we sometimes see in the fields, will prevent the proper development of the spiritual life. Take these away, so that the sunshine of

the Spirit may rest upon the heart, and the life again becomes prosperous.

*Conscience.*—Conscience is like a sun-dial ; if you let truth shine upon it, it will point to right. But you may cover it over so that no truth can fall upon it ; or you may let false light gleam upon it, and then it will lead you astray if you follow its guidance.

*The Jewish Economy.*—God acted in regard to the Jewish economy as He does in relation to all things. Few die suddenly ; most decay slowly. As an old tree dies by degrees, and puts forth a few delicate green leaves even after it is cut down, so did this aged faith when it was superseded by the new.

*God's Estimate and Man's.*—We are sometimes disposed to think that God does not regard sin as very wrong : at such times let us remember how much even a man who strives to be holy hates it ; then, since God is perfectly holy, He must hate it with a perfect hatred.

*Holiness.*—As pure white light is composed of seven colours, so the holiness of the perfect Christian character is composed of a number of distinct and beautiful virtues.

HUBERT BOWER.  
Brighton.



# A HOMILY

ON

## *Soul Priesthood.*

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### EMBLEMS OF SOUL WORK.

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“Priests unto God.”—Rev. xx. 6.

**P**RIESTHOOD is not only as old as man, but as old as the oldest of God’s moral creatures. Priestliness is an instinct of soul. It must ever be the highest delight, as well as the leading obligation, of all holy intelligences to offer up to their Creator oblations of gratitude and praise. Amongst *fallen* men, the priestly feeling of the soul soon gave rise to a sacerdotal order of men. In pre-Mosaic times, the head of the family and tribe was recognised as hierarch. When the Dispensation of Moses dawned upon the race, a certain class of men, with solemn ceremonial pomp, were set apart for priestly work. Priesthood continued amongst the Jews an office of stately sacredness and paramount influence, down from age to age, until He came who, by “one sacrifice perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Nor was the sacerdotal order confined to the Jews. Wide as the race has ever been, the craving of souls for some person or persons to mediate between the human and the Divine. Pagans have had, and still have, their priests. There have always been men who have professed to face

the anger of the gods, turn away their thunderbolts, and brighten men's heavens with love. The prevalence of priesthood through all lands and times is full of significance. It suggests truths which may be elaborated into systems,—truths which are the ground-work of all theologies. It implies, for example, man's instinctive faith in a personal God, and his belief that He knows all the events of man's individual history: it implies, moreover, a belief in man's moral relation to that God as a sinner, and in the necessity of meeting with Him through the mediation of others more holy than himself. These beliefs, I say, underlie all religions, and pervade all souls. They are independent of logic. Argument can neither prove nor falsify them. Their foundations are laid deep in the nature of us all. They are like fixed stars in the firmament of human history. The thick fogs of ignorance, and the floating vapors of scepticism, may cloud, but cannot quench them. They burn and blaze with an inextinguishable fire. Infidel theories to these are only as meteoric bodies to the eternal constellations. The stars may pale their lustre for a passing moment as these meteors sweep the horizon, but they always burn with a greater effulgence than ever the next hour.

If such universal and instinctive religious truths as these are implied in the very existence of a priesthood, it is manifestly absurd to refer, as the infidel has frequently done, all religion to the crafty influence of sacerdotal agency. Priesthoods are, to the religious in man, what the clouds are to the ocean,—the effect, not the cause. The sun-gales of intelligence may scatter all priests as clouds, but the ocean of religious sentiment in humanity will remain full and deep as ever. You may as well refer all poetry and philosophy to professional poets and sages, as to refer all religion to priests. As the spirit of poetry would have breathed in every creation of fancy, and that of philosophy in every step of earnest inquiry—had there never been such men as Homer and Socrates—so the spirit

of religion would have worked in humanity had there never been such men as Aaron and his class.

But our subject now is not *official* priesthood. The knell of all such priesthoods tolled when the Great High Priest of humanity exclaimed "It is finished." Wherever it is now found, whether in the heathen world or in Christendom, it exists, not by divine authority, but by human ignorance, and is to be deprecated as a curse, and denounced as an imposture. The *priesthood of souls* is our present theme—a priesthood in which it behoves all men to officiate. This is the priesthood spoken of in the text—a priesthood which is to offer up "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Why should the true work of the human soul be called a priesthood? Because it implies a *consciousness* of the Divine, a *fellowship* with the Divine, and a *devotion* to the Divine.

I. A CONSCIOUSNESS of the Divine. The very idea of priesthood implies the practical recognition of God. Official priests profess evermore to deal with the divine. Aristotle as a heathen defines a priest as one presiding over things relating to the gods ; and Paul, in describing the work of the Jewish priesthood, said,—"For every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God." God was to be everything to the priests of His appointment. He had to do with their clothing, their diet, their means of support. He was at once the Author, Master, and Object of all their ceremonies. They prepared their sacrifices by His directions, and they offered them to Him according to His will. A priest without a dominate consciousness of God would be a contradiction in theory, and a hypocrisy in conduct. The High Priest went into the "Holy of Holies," the very dwelling-place of the Almighty, the scene where His glory radiated, and His voice was heard. He stood in His very presence ; and amidst the effulgence of His glory, pleaded by symbolic acts for Israel.

Deep as may have been the impression which the high priest had of God's presence when he stood in the Holy of Holies, in the full light of the Shekinah, it was not deeper than *every man* should have in passing through this life. But why should souls be ever conscious of God's presence? Why! Because it is *reasonable*. His constant presence is a fact. Reason, apart from the Bible, teaches us that Omnipresence is an essential attribute of the Creator. He *fills all space*. He is present everywhere, at every point in space and at all times. How explicit, emphatic, and frequent are the expressions of the Holy Word on this point! "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" saith the Lord." His eyes "run to and fro throughout the whole earth." "Hell is open before Him, and destruction hath no covering." "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit; or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me; yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." Is it reasonable to ignore such a stupendous fact as this? Shall I recognise, as I am bound to do, all the little facts that come under my daily notice, and ignore the great fact that God is in all, ever present, never absent? Shall men of science give attention to the smallest facts of nature; write treatises on an insect's wing, or on the microscopic dust that floats in the atmosphere, and ignore the fact that God is present? If it is wise to take notice of the facts of nature, and wise it is beyond debate, how egregious and astounding the folly of ignoring the greatest of all facts —the presence of the all-creating, all-sustaining God? Do

you still ask why? I answer, Because it is *obligatory*. Who is he that is present with us? Our Maker, Sustainer, Proprietor, Author of all we have and are, and of all we hope to possess and be. To disregard the presence of such a Being is a heinous crime, a crime which in all worlds conscience condemns. Do you ask yet for another reason? I answer. Because it is *necessary*. It is indispensable to man's well-being. There is no true education without it. Men talk about educating without religion. You may partially develop man's intellect and his imagination, and his memory without religion, but you cannot educate himself without it. You may as well endeavour to evolve and bring into perfection the seed the husbandman has scattered over his tilled field without the sunbeam, as to talk about educating the soul without the consciousness of God. This alone can quicken and develop the spiritual faculties of man. Nor is there any moral power without it. It is only as we feel that God is with us that power comes to resist the evil and do the good, to brave peril and face death. "I have set the Lord always before me," said one of old, "because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved; therefore, my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope." Was God more present in the Holy of Holies when the High Priest stood before Him, or with Moses when Sinai flashed, thundered, and trembled beneath his feet, than He is in all the pulsations of human life? No, emphatically no! It is this consciousness of Divinity that gives nature all its poetry, grandeur, and soul-inspiring power.

The true work of the soul may be regarded as a priesthood because it involves :—

II. A FELLOWSHIP with the Divine. Concerning the "mercy seat," before which the High Priest stood in the Holy of Holies in the presence of God, Jehovah said to Moses, "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all

things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." There, if not in word, yet in symbol, the Priest spoke to God and God to the Priest. It might be asked, how can we hold fellowship with One who is invisible, "whom no eye hath seen, nor can see"? The question may be answered by another,—How does soul hold fellowship with soul? Human spirits are invisible to each other, yet do they not commune? do they not enjoy fellowship? How? By symbols and sayings, works and words. I hold fellowship with the distant and the dead through the works of their hands, either as they come directly under my eye or are reproduced in my memory. But words are the media of fellowship as well as works. Through words we pour our souls into another's and our minds meet and mingle in fellowship. Can we not thus hold fellowship with God? Around, above, and beneath me, His works are spread. Where can I turn my eye without meeting with His handiwork? All I see in nature are the embodiment and revelation of His ideas, and these ideas He intends me to study and appropriate. His Word, too, is in my hand; above all I have that wonderful Word of His,—the life of Jesus. This is the great organ by which He communicates His ideas to me. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds."

But can man receive the communication? Has he a capacity for it? He has. This is the glory of his nature. Of all the creatures on this earth man alone is able to receive the thoughts of God. As the soil is capable of taking into itself and germinating the seed of the husbandman, the human soul is capable of taking into itself and working out the ideas of the Divine mind. This capacity implies that we have something of Divinity in us. A creature must be human to understand humanity, and must

he not be somewhat Divine to understand Divinity? And not only has man a capacity to receive the thoughts of God, he *craves* for them. Never did infant yearn more naturally for the breast of its mother than the soul yearns instinctively for communications from the Infinite Father. Does not the popularity of all oracles and priesthood, ancient and modern, reveal this craving of the soul for communication from the Great Spirit? Ideas from God are the meat and drink of the soul; without them man dies,—dies to all that is true, noble, beneficent, and happy.

Beyond all this,—beyond what may be called the fellowship arising from *interpretable* ideas, there is an unspeakable and mystic intercourse. What devout soul in the chamber of devotion, the services of the Temple, or in some lonely walk amidst the grand sceneries of nature, has not felt a softening, hallowing influence that has lifted his soul into the conscious presence of his God, caused it to exclaim with Jacob, “Surely God is in this place”? This fellowship has been enjoyed by the good through all ages. Enoch walked with God; David foresaw the Lord always before him; Paul felt the Lord standing by his side. This fellowship has been promised to all men on certain conditions: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open unto me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.” This fellowship was the grand end of Christ’s mediation. “He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, He received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them.” The true work of the soul may be regarded as a priesthood, because it involves:—

III. A Devotion to the Divine. The priests under the law were consecrated in the most solemn and impressive manner to the service of God. They were in an especial sense God’s servants. What they were ceremonially, all souls should be spiritually and really; they should be consecrated to God. The priests were devoted to two special purposes.

First: To offer sacrifices for *themselves*. They had "to offer up sacrifice first for their own sins." What are the sacrifices that we have to offer to God? Not bulls or calves lambs or goats. Such sacrifices as these are of no moral worth. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." We must offer *ourselves*, nothing else will do. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." This self-consecration is the *first* act of all true soul priesthood. Whatever we present to God, unless we have first offered ourselves, will be worse than worthless; it will be impious and damned. The priests were set apart:—

Secondly: To offer sacrifices for *others*. The Jewish priests, after having offered sacrifices for themselves, offered sacrifices for the whole of Israel. True priesthood involves intercession. All souls are united by many a subtle bond; "no one liveth unto himself," and each is bound to seek the good of others. Intercession with God on behalf of others is a *social instinct* as well as a religious duty and high spiritual privilege. He who first consecrates himself is sure to mediate for the redemption of others: mediate not merely by presenting the needs of men to God, but by presenting the claims of God to man. All true souls have been intercessors. Abraham was an intercessor, Moses was an intercessor, Paul was an intercessor, Christ was the great model and all-prevalent Intercessor.

CONCLUSION: The true life of man then is that of a *priest*. No man, whatever his particular vocation in life—labourer, artisan, merchant, statesman, author—comes up to the ideal of his nature who is not a priest in all. The priestly spirit should be the dominant spirit of humanity, the priestly character the all in all in life. The Aaronic priesthood, in all its grandeur, was but a dim type of the priesthood of all true souls.

The priesthood of Christ is our great example. His priesthood is what the priesthood of every man should be. All should do as He did, regard themselves as consecrated to heaven, and like him stand aloof from every unclean thing; and be "separate from sinners." All should tread the earth not as a garden, a playground, or a market, but as a *temple*, whose sounds are the voices, and whose scenes are the symbols of the Eternal. The place, whereon we stand, is "holy ground." Christ's priesthood will be of no avail to us unless we become true priests to God ourselves. His priesthood is at once the *model* and the *means* of that priesthood of soul which is the supreme duty and sublimest destiny of all.

#### INTERCESSORY PRIESTHOOD.

THE doctrine of mediation is no startling theme. It does not clash with any of the phenomena of the universe around us. It is no discord in nature's voice—no harsh or grating note in her harmonious anthem. Its very congruity at once with our physical and our moral nature, is sufficient to render it *a priori* probable that we might meet with a further development of it in the higher department of theology. And when we consider the concurrent fact—a fact self-evident—that man is morally diseased, the ten thousand adaptations which we meet with in every department of the physical universe might lead us, inevitably, to the conclusion, that some such mediatorial influence would be adapted to his moral needs. How vain, then, are the objections of the infidel against the doctrine of mediation, whose actions are observable everywhere around us, as well as forming one of the very foundations of the Christian revelation. The principle follows us into the minutest details of private life. What is he, who, in the hour of danger, interposes with his strong arm for the protection of the weak, or, with his maturer wisdom, for the rescue of the thoughtless and inexperienced, but a mediator between them and peril? What is she, who, with noiseless step, paces the sick room, where the once stalwart man is laid prostrate with weakness, watching his eyes to catch their language, that the lips may be saved the necessity of speaking; anticipating his every want and desire, smoothing his pillow so softly that his aching head is eased, and his heart is reconciled to affliction by the thought of the loving attention it awakens—what is she but a mediator between him and the fell disease with which he is grappling? What is that mother who, with simple and eloquent words, and tears more eloquent, pleads with a sterner father for the hopeless boy whose early sins has nearly caused his expulsion from under the parent-roof—what but a mediatrix between him and the unknown evils that impended? What is she, who, by uncomplaining sighs and tears, and far more by patient, and therefore eloquent and silent endurance, has weaned a degraded and besotted husband from the poison cup of intoxication, or the maddening influence of the gaming-house to a love of his own hearth and home, and the society of those who are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh—what is she but a mediatrix between him and ruin?—RAGG.

## A Homiletic Glance at the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

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*Subject: Two WORLDS OF ONE RACE.*

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit: speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”—Eph. v. 15—21.

**ANNOTATION.**—*Ver. 15.*—“*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.*” These verses are a resumption of the preceding exhortations. Ellicott renders the clause we have quoted, “Take heed then how you walk with strictness, not as fools, but as wise.” The idea is, “Let there be a rigorous consistency of life, for this consistency is wise.”

*Ver. 16.*—“*Redeeming the time.*” “Buying up opportunities because the days are evil.”—Alford. In this way, the apostle intimates, the wisdom of a rigorous consistency of Christian conduct is to be developed. The expression seems simply to denote that we are to make wise use of circumstance either for ourselves or for others, and like the prudent merchants buy up opportunities for so doing. “*Because the days are evil.*” “Πονηρός, ‘evil,’ may be taken either in a physical or moral sense. The patriarch said, ‘Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.’ (Gen. xlvi. 9.) The moral sense of the word, however, is better suited to the context. ‘Evil days,’ means days in which sin abounds. It is parallel to the expressions, ‘evil generation,’ Matt. xii. 39; and ‘evil world,’ Gal. i. 4.”—Hodge.

*Ver. 17.*—“*Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*” “Therefore be ye not foolish, but understand what is the will of the Lord.”—Alford. Their grand aim in all their inquiries should be to ascertain the will of the Lord concerning them.

*Ver. 18.*—“*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.*” For the word “excess,” Ellicott substitutes “dissoluteness.” “It is not improbable that in this verse there is an allusion to the orgies of Bacchus, or to the festivals celebrated in honour of that

heathen God. He was 'the god of wine,' and during those festivals, men and women regarded it as an acceptable act of worship to become intoxicated, and with wild songs and cries to run through streets, and fields, and vineyards."—*Barnes.*

Ver. 19.—"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

"In psalms." The psalms of David were sung by the Jews in the Temple, and the earlier Christian, Matt. xxvi. 30, and they "have been a part of public worship through all ages. "And hymns." A hymn is properly a song or ode in honour of God. It is not easy to discover the exact distinction between psalms and hymns; the latter perhaps were mere human compositions formed on the model of the psalms. Both were religious songs, and both were sung in worship. "Speaking to yourselves," should be speaking "to each other." "It signifies the interchange of thoughts and feelings expressed in the psalms and hymns employed. This is supposed to refer to responsive singing in the private assemblies and public worship of Christians, to which the well-known passage of Pliny: '*Carmen Christo quasi Deo dicunt secum invicem,*' seems also to refer. Whether the passage refers to the responsive method of singing or not, which is somewhat doubtful from the parallel passage in Colossians (where Paul speaks of their teaching one another), it at least proves that singing was from the beginning a part of Christian worship, and that not only psalms, but hymns were also employed."—*Hodge.* "And making melody in your heart to the Lord." The psalmody that does not express the rhythm of the affections has no spiritual merit. It is the music of the affections, whether expressed in song or not, that alone reaches the ear of God.

Ver. 20.—"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Liturgy of the Episcopal Church recognises the duty enjoined: "We, thine unworthy servants, do give Thee most humble and hearty thanks for Thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men."

**HOMILETICS.**—All these verses must be brought in under the same heading as the verses discussed in our preceding article, viz.—"Two worlds of one race." These verses continue to indicate the duties pertaining to the world of *Christian* men. The duties which we previously discussed were *separation, reprobation, illumination, and resuscitation*; the duties which we have now to notice are *Christian consistency, holy excitement, and social worship*.

**I. CHRISTIAN CONSISTENCY.** "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." The verses teach that walking strictly in harmony with the Christian creed implies—

First: *Wisdom.* "Not as fools, but as wise." A conduct inconsistent with the Christian creed we profess is exceedingly

foolish. (1.) It damages our own moral nature. (2.) It misrepresents the Gospel of Christ. (3.) It insults the Omniscience of God. Hypocrisy is in *every way unwise*.

The verses teach that walking strictly in harmony with the Christian creed implies—

Secondly : *Diligence*. “Redeeming the time”—“Buying up opportunities.” How is time to be redeemed? Not by regaining any portion of the past. The past is irrecoverably gone. Not by inoperative regrets concerning the wrong of the past. Not by mere sentimental desires that the future may be better. How then? (1.) By deducing the true moral lessons of the past. (2.) By a deep and devout determination to avoid all the evils of the past. (3.) By turning every circumstance of our life to a right spiritual account. “Because the days are evil,” says Paul. The times in which Paul wrote were corrupt; our times are corrupt.

There are several things that make our times evil. (1.) A ruling secularism. How mercenary is our age! (2.) Religious formalism. The forms of religion abound everywhere, the real spirit is rare. The “letter” is killing the “spirit.” (3.) Sceptical rationalism. The world’s philosophy, as it is called, is for the most part antitheistic, anti-supernatural, anti-Christian. These elements fill the social atmosphere with the moral fungi that make our “days” evil. Because our days are charged with so many evils we should be diligent: we should seize every opportunity to crush the wrong and to promote the right.

The verses teach that walking strictly in harmony with the Christian creed implies—

Thirdly : *Enquiry*. “Understanding what the will of the Lord is.” God has a *will* concerning us, and it is our duty to endeavour to understand it and for this purpose we must inquire into it.

Another duty here indicated concerning Christians, is:—

**II. HOLY EXCITEMENT.** “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit.” This verse suggests several thoughts.

First: *Man has an instinctive craving for excitement*. The words evidently imply this. Paul assumes that his readers must have excitement in telling them in what they should and in

what they should not find it. Excitement is a necessity of our nature. The soul has a deep hunger for it. (1.) Observation shows this. Look at society, either as it appears on the page of history, or as it surrounds you now in all the activities of life ; and you will find that the love of excitement explains much of all its restlessness, amusement and toils. (2.) Consciousness shows this. All are conscious of this impulse. Monotony and stagnation become intolerable. We crave a quicker pulse, a warmer and a fuller passion. Yes, man has a native hunger for excitement. Hence the popularity of *sensational* theatres, sports, books, scenes, music, sermons.

Secondly: *Man has recourse to improper expedients for excitement.* "Be not drunken with wine." Wine stimulates excitement. It quickens the pulse, it heats the blood, it fires the passions. Hence men like it. They use it not for the sake of intoxication, but excitement. Wine-drinking is only one of many improper expedients for excitement. Drunkenness is here a type of whatever improperly stimulates the senses and kindles the lusts. (1.) There is sensualism. How many seek excitement in an inordinate gratification of mere animal propensities ! (2.) There is gambling. What thousands resort to the race-course, the exchange, the billiard table, for excitement. (3.) There is immoral literature. Luscious tales, filthy narratives, and sensational romances : these are eagerly sought because they make the imagination glow with impure fires. The other duty here indicated concerning Christians, is :—

III. SOCIAL WORSHIP. "Speaking to yourselves," &c. These verses (from the 19th to the 21st) show what is meant by being "filled with the spirit."

First: *High spiritual intercourse with man.* "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." Speaking to men the highest things in the highest forms of language, poetry. High feeling always runs into poetry.

Secondly: *Devout fellowship with Christ.* "Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." The soul pouring out its devotions in sweet melodies in the Divine ear.

Thirdly: *Thankful recognition of Divine favours.* "Giving thanks always for all things unto God."

Fourthly: *Godly devotion to the common weal.* "Submitting

yourselves one to another in the fear of God." All this is implied in being "filled with the Spirit." And is there not sufficient *excitement* here? To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the Spirit's ideas; and what exciting ideas are His! With the Spirit's purposes; and what inspiring purposes are His! With the Spirit's love; and what an immensity of stirring impulses is in that love.

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#### WORSHIP.

"It is reported of the King of Morocco that he told the English ambassador in King John's time, that he had lately read St. Paul's Epistle, which he liked so well that were he to choose his religion he would embrace Christianity, but, saith he, every one ought to die in the faith wherein he was born. So it is with many amongst us; they are persuaded they ought, are resolved they will, live and die in those customs and ways wherein they were born; and so they may do—nay, so they must do—provided that such customs and forms, whereunto they seem to be so fast glued, be according to the pattern in the mount, the revealed will of God; but it is to be feared that such are more addicted to customs than Scriptures, choosing rather to follow what hath been, though never so absurd and irregular, than consider what should be, though never so orthodox and uniform."—*Things New and Old.*

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## Germs of Thought.

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### THE FOREIGN PULPIT.

#### *Subject: FAITH.*

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—Heb. xi. 6.

**W**HEN the preacher preaches of faith, how many are there in whose eyes he appears to speak like a dreamer, and who hear as dreamers. If a man will understand what love is, he must love: if a man will understand what faith is, he must believe. But is, then, the land of faith a charmed and mystic ground, which one cannot enter except by a miracle? But, I ask, where is the child of man who has never loved, and hence

known what love is? And is love to the eternal good so very different from love to the finite good? And where is the child of man who has not believed in a *man*, and thereby learnt the beginning of what faith in the things of God is? There is a way, too, upon which one may attain to faith, and—if one could preach of faith, and the way to faith as impressively as Jesus did to the Samaritans, as Paul did to the jailor, as Luther did to our people, could the preaching of faith be in vain? We will speak, then, of faith.

If we would know what faith is, we must first of all observe the distinction that there is a faith which is lacking in no one of us, a faith which is *the ground of all religion*; and a faith which may be lacking in many of you, and which is *the ground of our salvation in Christ*. But this last rises out of the first. I will speak at this time simply of the faith which is *the ground of all religion*.

This is the subject spoken of in the text. What it tells us is, how a man may come to God. To come to God is to come into fellowship with Him, and what else is religion than fellowship with God? So that you now understand—that which is a stumbling-block to many—that it is impossible to please God without faith. Can the child please his father if he has no desire for the fellowship of his father? And it is equally certain that no mortal man can please God if he has no desire within him after fellowship with God, that is after religion.

But of what kind is this faith which religion requires? We are told this at the beginning of this chapter, where it is said that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Observe how these words point to the two halves contained in our text. “Indubitable assurance of things not seen;” that is, *of the invisible nature of God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being*, though the eye has never seen Him, nor the ear heard Him; though the hands have never touched Him, nor the five senses been able to reach Him. “Indubitable assurance of things hoped for;” that is, that God *will be a rewarder in the world to come*. Faith is, therefore, an indisputable conviction; and both of things *present but invisible*, and of things *future and hidden*. And upon what does this indisputable conviction rest? Not upon the authority of any human testimony, for the five senses are not able to touch this

object of faith, that one may bear historical testimony to it—not upon proof and demonstration. We read soon after our text, “by faith Abraham went out into the land which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, not knowing whither he went ;” but if Abraham had waited till it had been proved to him by conclusive argument that this was the land of promise, and that he should inherit it, he would not have entered it to this day. It is said of Moses, “by faith he passed through the Red sea as by dry land ;” but if he had waited till some one should prove to him that floods would stand up like a wall, and a child of man go through on dry foot, he would have been in the land of bondage to this day. And in like manner, touching the conviction of that which faith hopes for, that is, the hope that it is not all over with us when we are laid in the grave ; that God has built a city for His believing people with eternal foundations, and that, as Scripture says, He would be ashamed to be called their God if it were otherwise. We do not believe in this city even, upon the authority of historical testimony, for no one has ever come back from it except the One who belonged to it from eternity. And if we would by a chain of reasoning reach out to those distant shores, the chain would prove too short just where we needed it most, in the hour of death. No, this faith is not proved by authority : it proves itself. As our text says, “*faith is itself the proof* of that which we do not see.” This faith, therefore, is a light which shines by its own virtue. Have you not read of the eternal Word of God who has become a light, and enlightens every man who comes into the world ? It is the light of faith that bears witness in every man of that invisible Being in whom we live, and move, and have our being, without our being able to perceive Him with the five senses ; and of that city with eternal foundations, which God has built for His own. This, therefore, is religious faith—as to its *nature*, an absolute conviction of the present invisible, and of the future and hidden. As to its *kind*, a conviction apart from human testimony, apart from ordinary proof, a light shining by its own virtue : as to its *origin*, a piece of the eternal light of the Word, who was from the beginning with God, nourished by the Spirit of God.

There are two points, therefore, to which this faith must direct itself if a man is to come to God. First : There is a supreme

Good, an all-satisfying Being ; he that will come to God must believe that *God is*. And what does that mean ? That some one is, out of the thousand names into which mortals have split the Divinity ? Yes, if one only approaches with praying hands and with a heart full of longing ; and if one can only lift up hands, and heart too, to one of the thousand sparks into which mortals have split and shivered the Great Spiritual Sun—that is religion, they *mean* the one living God even though they do not *know* Him. How else could Paul have said in Athens that he wished to preach to them of the God whom they worshipped, without knowing Him ? How could it be said to Cornelius, “*Thy prayers have come up for a memorial before God ?*” But we do not forget that it is written that the darkness does not comprehend the light. Into a thousand glimmering deceptions has it been broken up. Men have even raised their own vices and passions to a seat among the gods. It is not said that he must believe that *there is a God*, but that he must believe that *God is*—God who alone is called God because He is the fountain of all good, the God of whom it is further said just below that Noah believed in Him when he built his ark, and Moses when he went through the flood, and Abraham when he went out into the land which as yet he did not know. It is no other than this God who is sought in religion, for what the human heart seeks in religion is the source of all goodness.

If you will come to God, therefore, you must have the assured confidence that there is an all-sufficient Being who is a light for your troubled eye, a fountain of life for your wearied heart, a strength for your impotence, a medicine for your sickness, a balm for your wounds, who can give *rest* to your heart in all its needs and can *fill up* all your longings, who gives you enough here but is not exhausted in eternity. A man who believes that will say, “*Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee : my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion.*” How easy it is made for us to attain this faith—I speak to you who have been born through grace in the arms of the Church which has in its midst the ark of the testimony of this all-sufficient God. What clouds of witnesses about you to this, that *He is*. There is the witness of the light, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world, which you too have ; but how much beyond this

have you ! Have you not the history of redemption, running through thousands of years, bearing witness on every page that *He is* ? To you Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs appeal, exclaiming, Hallelujah, *He is, He is!* If you know Christ, the history of your own life declares on every page that *He is*. Yes, *He is Jehovah, who is and was and is to come in the history of His Church for ever.*

Over you and around you and in you is this all-sufficient Being who can fill up all your longings and dry your tears if only the other point of faith is regarded of which the text says, “he must believe that *He is a rewarder*,” &c.

Of what avail to know that there is an all-sufficient One who can still all your longings, that there is One supremely good who can remove every want, unless you know that *He is for you* ? But if you know and believe this you are a blessed man, for you now know that heaven and earth, with all that therein is, are for you and can be secured by you. *Can* be secured, I say, wishing by this to express, what the text does, that God is a *rewarder* of those who seek Him ; that He does not distribute the fulness of His good gifts without law or rule but according to an eternal order. Yes, He is called in Scripture a God of order who does not take His laws from without, whose law rather is His own Being ; but who also, according to this eternal law of His Being, relates Himself to you as you to him ; as it is written, “With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure and with the foward thou wilt show thyself foward : draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” That, therefore, is the other point of faith upon which all religion rests among men, that you believe that the One who is supremely good is *for you* with all His fulness but that He only gives himself, to those whom He has made, according to the sacred law of His Being, and therefore only to those who seek Him. Not that we have to make the first advance. “In this was manifested the love of God to us, not that we first loved Him but that He first loved us.”

He is a rewarder, also He *will be*. Is it not singular how the very faith which here drinks of His fulness bears the loudest testimony to the necessity of a recompense in the future ? “If I have Thee I ask nothing more in heaven or earth,” exclaims faith in Asaph ; and it is the same faith which exclaims in Paul, “if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men

most miserable." The grace of God is an inexhaustible fountain—it is not drained by the few drops which this earthly life can take of it. To seek God is a great thing, and He is a rich Lord. When He says to a soul that has sought Him, as He said to Abraham, "I am thy exceeding great reward," He gives the reward, not in drops but in streams; and gives so richly in this world that there is an overflowing, as it were, into eternity.

Will any stumble at the word *reward* because there is a flavour of self-seeking in it? Well then instead of speaking of a reward of faith in eternity, let us speak of its *unfolding*, for it is nothing else than that that is meant—the unfolding of the fulness and immensity which faith has in itself, for which the earthly world is too narrow. This is what the Lord expresses when He says, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall have in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." So that it cannot be otherwise—it must be so that wherever there is religion there must be also the faith, not simply that God is a rewarder, but that He will be a rewarder *throughout all eternity*.

Well then, you to whom *saving* faith is still a secret—I mean the faith in the Son of God, which is the ground of our salvation—make a beginning with that which is the ground of all religion, faith in the Father.

But no authoritative creed must it be, resting on this, that others have believed whom you imitate; no truth simply for the head must it be, supported by proofs which a logical mind can build up and a more skilful mind pull down again. It must be a faith which rises out of the light that lightens every man that cometh into the world, and which, like the light, shines by its own virtue. Let there only be more reflection, more longing and prayer, more attention to the witness of Scripture; to the light of faith which burns so dimly in you.

Holy Father! If there are some here who desire this faith, and have not yet been able to find it, help Thou, that they may seek Thee with praying hands and with hearts full of longing; and we all, we of the weak faith, and we of the little faith, stretch forth praying hands to Thee and bring Thee hearts full of longing, and cry, "Lord, we believe, help Thou our unbelief."

*From the German,*  
BY R. VAUGHAN PRYCE, MA., LL.B.

## FAITH AND WORKS.

Two gentlemen were one day crossing the river in a ferry boat. A dispute about faith and works arose : one saying that good works were of small importance, and that faith was every thing, the other asserting the contrary. Not being able to convince each other, the ferryman, an enlightened Christian, asked permission to give his opinion. Consent being granted, he said, "I hold in my hands two oars. That in my right hand I call 'faith,' the other, in my left, 'works.' Now, gentlemen, please to observe, I pull the oar of faith, and pull that alone. See ! the boat goes round and round, and the boat makes no progress. I do the same with the oar of works, and with a precisely similar result—no advance. Mark ! I pull both together, we go on space, and in a very few minutes we shall be at our landing-place. So, in my humble opinion," he added, "faith without works, or works without faith, will not suffice. Let there be both, and the haven of eternal rest is sure to be reached. As the flowers before the fruit, so is faith before good works. Faith is the parent of works, and the children will bear a resemblance to the parent."—ARCHBISHOP WHATELEY.



## VISIONS OF GOD.—No. I.

*Subject: THE VISION OF MOSES.*

"I am that I am."—Exod. iii. 14.

**T**HIS vision takes us back to the self-existent character of God's nature. *Our* life is derived. The life of the Eternal One is underived. But that life is the fountain of our spiritual and intellectual being. We cannot, therefore, know too much of that nature which is the ground of our own. We may gather much knowledge from nature, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen," &c. God so speaks in nature as to confound atheism, since there are such unmistakeable indications of law, order, design, that a Law-giver and Designer are the natural deduction of every healthy mind. While, however, we have in nature food for the intellect—a storehouse of delight for the imagination—there is not a sufficiency there for the heart of man. The affectional in man hungers and thirsts for something else. *Revelation* supplies it. In revelation we have the Voice, the Person, the Being of God Himself. We could not have *discovered* these as we have them in revelation. The supernatural is to be increasingly

prized. In the visions of Scripture we have the gradual unfolding of the Divine nature.

**I. THE SURROUNDINGS OF THIS VISION.**—First: *It is given to Moses while engaged in his lawful calling.* No useful calling is unholy. The only unholy state of life is to be in a world where there is so much to be done, and to be doing nothing. Moses, Saul, David, Gideon, Elisha, and others, have been called to higher service when usefully occupied on a lower plane. Secondly: *It was given to a man already prepared for conspicuous service by a remarkable Providence co-operating with maternal sagacity.*

**II. THE REVELATION IT CONTAINED.** “I am that I am.” The underived character of the Divine nature. Jehovah is the Eternal One who never ceases; the Being who exists by internal necessity; the prime cause of existence; not created like all the other objects of the universe; therefore not depending upon any body or any thing for existence. Consequently the will and intention of Jehovah are certain to be executed. Such a revelation as this of the Eternity and Immutability of God bears upon its forefront the marks of a Divine Revelation.

The power of God—His competency for what He has undertaken—are expressed in this name. Translate it into New Testament language—“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

**III. TWO INFERENCES DEDUCIBLE.** First: *God uses mediators when He reveals Himself to men.* In the spiritual world—angels. On earth the tongue of man is enlisted in his service. Despise not the voice because it is a human voice. The more human the more divine. Secondly: *The true knowledge of God is the power of deliverance to the enslaved.* The revelation that a greater than Pharaoh cared for them was to be the stimulus to snap their fetters and be free. Nothing but a true knowledge of God will ever move men to fight against corrupt principles, vicious practices, evil habits. We are creatures of love and of faith, and need something to move our faith into vigorous exercise; we need an unchanging object

worthy of our love. "This is life eternal, to know Thee—the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

R. THOMAS, M.A.



*Subject: GIDEON'S ANSWER TO THE MEN OF EPHRAIM.*

"Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?"—Judges viii. 2.

**N**OTICE some of the principal events in the life of Gideon, especially those which led to his being called to fight with the Midianites. "Abiezer" is a Hebrew name, and signifies "Father of help," he was the founder of the family to which Gideon belonged. Gideon did not send for the men of Ephraim to take the field against the Midianites until the battle was well nigh won, and therefore the Ephraimites "did chide with him sharply." Gideon pacifies them by the delicate allusion of our text, which intimates that what the Ephraimites did by destroying the princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb—was a greater and more glorious work than that done by himself and the people that were with him. He, in effect, says, "Although we at the beginning, had a chance of plucking from the whole vine—for we had all the army of the enemy before us—yet the few grapes you gathered—the two princes you slew—your gleanings is better than our vintage." Having thus briefly explained the text, let us notice a few lessons suggested by it.

I. **A SOFT ANSWER TURNETH AWAY WRATH.** (α) The men of Ephraim were proud and warlike; had Gideon answered them in anger as they had addressed him, the result would, in all probability, have been civil war. This, however, was averted by the soft answer which Gideon gave. "Is not the gleanings." &c. (β) The lesson may be applied to the *Christian church*. (γ) It is also applicable to the *home life*. Numberless have been the domestic quarrels which might have been avoided, had a soft answer been given to the irritated one, and there are on earth not a few Pandemoniums which might have been Edens were it not for angry looks and words, and still more angry blows.

How many men by their unruly tempers have driven their wives to the verge of despair, and caused the faces of their children to pale with fear as they heard "Father's footstep" nearing home. And how many women, simply because they would not try to make themselves agreeable even, have caused their husbands to go elsewhere for society, and to the gin palace in order that they may "drown dull care?" All these things might be prevented if the heads of households would just try to "bear and forbear" one with another. If they would only remember that "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

II. It is better to destroy the PRINCIPLES of evil than to be constantly fighting against RESULTS. (α) Oreb and Zeeb were the princes of the Midianites, they were also commanders of the army. Let but these men be destroyed and Israel had no need to fear the rest; it was not likely that an already flying foe would rally when they found their commanders slain. The men of Ephraim killed Oreb and Zeeb, and hence Gideon's question, "Is not the gleaning, &c." (β) We are told in classic story, that when "Epaminondas, a Grecian general, wished to show his soldiers that they might overcome the army of the enemy if they could but once vanquish the Spartans who led the van, he did this by crushing the head of a large serpent in their presence, and then showing them that the rest of the body had no power." And so with evil; destroy the principle in whatever form it manifests itself, and you prevent numberless results which would otherwise have appeared; uproot the results of evil, but leave the principle, and you will have to go over the ground again. Have you ever seen farmers in the spring time hoeing corn? Some in their hurry to get over a large extent of ground in a little time, go very carelessly to work, and instead of cutting weeds up by the roots they only take off the heads, whilst others take more time, and cutting deeply down into the ground, destroy the roots as well as the leaves. What is the result? Go into the fields of these men in harvest time; in the one you will find thistles, spire-grass, wild convolvulus, and fifty other weeds with only a little corn, whilst in the other, the eye everywhere beholds the waving of the golden ears. And so when you deal with the sins of society. It will be of comparatively little use dealing with this and that result of sin, for it

will only be like cutting off the heads of weeds, but go to the root of the matter, deal with sin as sin, and present the great remedy even the blood of Christ, "which cleanseth from all sin." Now-a-days, it is the fashion to have various societies for various objects, we have our so-called "Temperance Societies," and our "Anti-social-evil Societies," and in proportion as these societies seek to lead men to Jesus they are doing a great work, and we bid them God's speed ; but when their object is to turn men and women from one particular vice merely, and to swell the list of names on the secretaries' roll, I do not say that such societies do not do good, but it seems to me that they are only engaged in the foolish operation of cutting the heads off weeds. Engage brethren, in whatever work you can, under whatever name the society which directs you may be called, but first of all be sure that the society has, and you yourself have, an earnest desire to lead wandering souls to Christ. For it is Christ *only* who can free the prisoner from the fetters which bind him down, who can strike off the chains of habit which make the man a slave. It is Christ and Christ only who can say to the drunkard, to the Magdalene, and *all* who are the servants of sin, "Thy sins which are many are forgiven ; go, and sin no more."

**III. PROMPTNESS IN RESPONDING TO THE CALL OF DUTY IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE SUCCESS.** ( $\alpha$ ) When Gideon sent to the men of Ephraim, and commanded them to take the fords of Jordan, they might have said, "No ; we were not sent for to the battle at the beginning, and now we will not come." But they did not so. "They gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan." They responded *at once* to the call of duty, and the result was, "The gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim was better than the vintage of Abiezer." ( $\beta$ ) There is a miserable amount of *little-mindedness* amongst many professing Christians of the present day. Because they can't do this or that just in their own way, and at their own time, they won't do anything at all. Because they are not looked up to, and placed in the position they think they should occupy, they will let things take their own course, and won't so much as put forth their little fingers to help on the ark of the Lord. But can this be called Christianity ? Will the Master at the last

day say, "Well done," to such conduct as this? And does not every true-hearted disciple cry *shame* upon it too? What does it matter where you work, so long as you do your duty in the sphere in which you are placed. You may be capable of putting forth more strength—you may have greater talents than your fellow-labourers give you credit for possessing—and they may pass you by time after time—but at the right time the right place will be found, and the call will be heard, "Friend, come up higher." Meanwhile, labour patiently where you are, for the man who does his duty in small things is the man who will be called to a larger field of labour soon.

IV. ALTHOUGH LATE IN THE FIELD, THAT IS NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD BE DISCOURAGED. (α) Some gleanings may be left by those who have gone before, and the gleanings may be better than the vintage. It was so in this case; the Ephraimites were late on the battle-field, but had they not gone, in all probability Oreb and Zeeb would not have been slain. And so in the Christian warfare; there are many of you, if you would only step forward and join the ranks of Jesus, who might slay many an Oreb and many a Zeeb. "Too late," do you say; "I am old, and grey-headed now—too old to wield the sword, and too feeble to raise the shield;" that excuse might keep you from using the carnal sword, but it will not serve, as that finely-tempered blade the sword of the spirit, is held out for you to grasp. Brothers, there is work for you all to do—a battle for you all to fight, old as well as young. For the Church needs the wisdom and prudence of old age, as well as the impetuosity and the fire of youth. There are various enemies to encounter, and it may be that those of you who to-day will enlist in the army of Christ, and fight beneath the standard of the Cross, will win the greatest glories. And as by your hands the principles of evil are overthrown, the song of victory will rise. And then, as before your arms, the enemy will flee, as did the Midianites before "the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon," that song of victory will louder rise and longer grow, until the army on earth and the army yonder, beyond the skies, will blend their voices in the full chorus strain, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and the kingdoms of this world are become the heritage of our Lord and of His Christ."

(β) But meanwhile I ask, are you in the battle at all, or are you lazily looking on whilst others fight? See to it that you are engaged somewhere or other. I care not whether you be like Gideon and his men behind the foe, or like the men of Ephraim before, but be somewhere in the field. Strike some blow in the name of the Lord. Beat down Oreb and Zeeb if you can. "Overturn, overturn, saith the Lord," until Satan's kingdom is destroyed, and the Ancient of Days doth reign.

*Haslingden.*

**A. F. BARFIELD.**

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*Subject: RELIGIOUS SIGN SEEKERS.*

"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."—Matt. xii. 38—42.

**L**EARN, I. THAT THE DEMAND FOR ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGES GENERALLY COMES FROM THOSE ALREADY POSSESSED OF VERY MANY. It was the Scribes and Pharisees, not the Publicans, who made this request. It was to the brethren of Dives who had Moses and the prophets that a man was to go from the dead. So now, men are always laying their irreligion to their circumstances, want of time, or to God; waiting for Him to work a deeper conviction of sin, &c. You think if you had something which you have not it would be easy to be a Christian.

Learn, II. GOD NEVER GIVES ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGES WHERE THOSE POSSESSED ARE NOT USED. God does not cast pearls before swine. Many with fewer advantages have done better. If you want more spiritual help, use what you have. Christ refused this demand because, (1.) It was merely an excuse for their rejection of Him. So with those who blame their circumstances,

&c. (2.) Because it was a reflection on Him. It said your credentials are insufficient. So you virtually ascribe your irreligion to God. (3.) Because the request bore no proof of earnestness—not a request like that of Nicodemus, nor of John the Baptist from prison. Had it sprung from genuine doubt, Christ would have treated it differently. The genuine seeker need not be discouraged. (4.) Because God's past dealings afforded all the proof requisite. This Christ intimates by using Jonah as a sign who up to this time had not been so regarded. Thus the Bible contains examples of salvation under every variety of circumstance sufficient to encourage every sincere inquirer.

Learn, III. FAILURE TO USE THE ADVANTAGES WE POSSESS CAN ONLY ISSUE IN CONDEMNATION. Christ justifies his refusal of a sign by adducing the case of Nineveh, to show that it is not the possession of more or less advantage which is the cause of the failure to receive Divine Truth; for the Ninevites repented at, &c. The Ninevites would condemn the Jews, much more Gospel hearers now; for (1) Jonah preached but one short sermon for forty days; Christ preached for three years; and how many years have some of you heard the Gospel? Compare the preaching of Jonah and of Christ. (2.) Jonah preached wrath and ruin—"Repent or perish;" Christ, love. The Cross and not hell-fire is the centre of the Gospel. (3.) Jonah was a sinful man—Christ is the Son of God, who prays you to come unto him. If you reject the Gospel, Nineveh will condemn you.

The Queen of Sheba is another illustration of the same truth; (notice, by the way, the conscious dignity of Christ—"a greater than Solomon is here"). (1.) This woman came to see and hear a great man—out of curiosity—to hear his wisdom and to see his treasures. You do not listen to the wisdom of Christ, and set light on the treasures of heaven. (2.) The Queen of Sheba came from afar; her journey across a desert. Many now make the most trivial thing an excuse for not attending the worship of God. The Queen had far to go; Christ knocks at your door—she cared more for Solomon than you for Christ. (3.) The Queen came of her own accord, uninvited; you do not come when invited. (4.) The Queen came to Solomon on a mere *report* of his fame; you do not come when the *word* of God is pledged to receive you. Report proverbially exaggerates the wisdom and

wealth of a man, but still the Queen came. Only sober truth has been written about the blessings of the Gospel. The Queen will condemn you.

Thus your need is not more light, but opened eyes ; not the sound of the Gospel, but ears to hear it ; not more knowledge, but the will to use what you have. For this pray.

C. LANKESTER, B.A.

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## The Pith of Renowned Sermons,

A R C H B I S H O P L E I G H T O N.

*Subject: CONFORMITY WITH CHRIST.*

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind : for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."—1 Peter iv. 1.

**T**HE chief study of a Christian, and the very thing that makes him to be a Christian, is conformity with Christ. "This is the sum of religion," said a wise heathen, "to be like him whom thou worshippest." But this example, being in itself too sublime, is brought down to our view in Christ ; the brightness of God is veiled, and veiled in our own flesh that we may be able to look on it. The inaccessible light of the Deity is attempered in the humanity of Christ. And therefore is He set before us in the Gospel, in so clear and lively colours, that we may make this our whole endeavour to be like Him. Consider here—

**I. THE HIGH ENGAGEMENT (obligation) TO THIS CONFORMITY.** The engagement (obligation) lies in this, that "He hath suffered for us." He hath suffered as our example, and as our ransom.

First : Conformity to Him is made *reasonable*, in a double sense, by His suffering for us. (1.) It is due that we follow Him who *led us thus as the Captain of our Salvation*. It is strange how *deists* have addicted themselves to their head, to be at his rejection of *God* day, in summer and winter ; to refuse no travel

or endurance of hardship for him ; and all only to please him and serve his inclination and ambition, *e. g.*, the veterans of Cæsar. That the Son of God should descend to teach wretched man, and the Great King to descend into man, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay, to set up a school in it, for such ignorant, accursed creatures, and should in His own person act the hardest lessons, both in doing and suffering, to lead us in both ! (2.) It is due that we follow Him as having suffered as *our surety and in our stead*. He went through death, so vile a death—to procure our life. This lays upon us an obligation beyond all conceiving that “He first suffered for us.”

Second : Conformity to Him is made *easy*, by His suffering for us. Our burden that pressed us to hell being taken off, is not all that is left to suffer or to do as nothing ? Our chains that bound us to eternal death being knocked off, shall we not walk, shall we not run in His ways ? “His yoke easy, and His burden light.”

II. THE NATURE OF THIS CONFORMITY. First : *It is not a remote resemblance.* It is “suffering in the flesh.” Our Pattern was not angelic, nor merely Divine, but Incarnate. “Christ hath suffered in the flesh.”

Second : *It is spiritual conformity.* It is not merely the enduring of outward affliction, but a more inward and spiritual suffering. It is the suffering and dying of our corruption ; the mortification and destruction of that part of our nature which the Scripture calls “*the flesh*.” By sin the very soul becomes gross and earthly, as it were, turned to flesh. Such an one, “minds earthly things.” Once in Christ, and then even your necessary general care for this natural life will be regulated and moderated by the spirit.

Thirdly : *It is complete conformity*—both “cease from sin.” That is, he is at rest from it. He has a godly death, as they that die in the Lord rest from their labours. (Rev. xiv. 13.) Christ’s death is the death of sin in us, just as our sin was the cause of his death. The death of Christ kills the soul to sin—“I am crucified with Christ.” The means by which this conformity is attained are painful—(a crucifying). So this death of ours is like Christ’s for us. And since love desires nothing more than likeness, and shares willingly in all with the party beloved,

we can here have the joy of fellowship with Christ. And when the suffering leads eventually to the death of sin, just as death severs a man from his dearest and most familiar friends, so doth the love of Christ, and His death flowing from it, sever the heart from its most beloved ones.

III. THE ACTUAL IMPROVEMENT OF THIS CONFORMITY. "Arm yourselves with the same mind." There is involved—

First: *Contest with sin.* "Arm yourselves." There is still fighting. Sin, though wounded to death, yet will it struggle for life, and seek to wound its enemy, will assault the graces that are in you. The old man is stout, and will fight himself to death ; and at the weakest will rouse up itself and exert its dying spirits. Live in arms. When it is worst with you, do not throw them away, nor lay them away when you are at best.

Secondly: *Contemplation and application of Christ.* The way to be armed is "with the same mind." How would my Lord Christ carry Himself in such, or such a case ? Study Him much as the reason and rule of mortification, and the real cause and spring of mortification. The pious contemplation of His death will most powerfully kill the love of sin in the soul, and kindle an ardent hatred of it. Wouldest thou have much power against sin, and much increase of holiness, let thine eye be much on Christ ; set thine heart on Him ; let it dwell in Him, and be still with Him.

*Bristol.*

URIAH R. THOMAS.



## Variations on Themes from Scripture.

*Subject: THE UNIVERSAL FATHER.*

**H**E who, in taking leave of His apostles, told them that He was going to His Father, and their Father, had long before exhorted them to be the children, or rather to approve themselves in very deed the children, "of your Father which is in

heaven," who, Fatherly in all and to all, Fatherly in all things and to all men, maketh His sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good, and sendeth rain not only on the just, but on the unjust. For we are all His offspring. There is One God and Father of all. Through the Son indeed we have access to the Father—be that never forgotten. But never forgotten, either, be the declaration of the Son, that "the Father Himself loveth you." And this with a Father's, and, therefore, an unpurchased, an unpurchasable love. And "if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more"—the *à fortiori* is the Son's own emphasis—"shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him." "If even you"—thus the passage has been paraphrased—"if even you, sinful and evil, would lose your rest, would cut off every selfish indulgence, that you might see your children's wants supplied, that you might see the little things happy and good, then take this blessed assurance to your heart, that in all you feel towards your children, you have a faint and far reflection of how the great God above us feels towards you." "You know how a Father will work, how a mother will watch, all for the good of their little ones. . . . Well, says Christ, you know all that; and now hear me, and believe me when I tell you that the great Father above is just like *that*, only a thousandfold better." And herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Loved us, therefore, in our sins, and before the propitiation was made. So loved us, as to cause the propitiation to be made. In this was manifested the love of God to us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is life, as herein is love. The life that springs from the fontal source of all life; the love that bespeaks the essential fatherhood of the Everlasting Father.

Canon Kingsley taxes the "religious world" with the loss of a belief which even the elder Greeks and Romans had—of a "Zeus, father of gods and men." How many of this generation, he once asked, believe in a universal Father in heaven? "Is not their doctrine, the doctrine to testify for which the religious world exists, the doctrine which, if you deny, you are met with one universal frown and snarl—that man has no Father in heaven; but that if he becomes a member of the religious

world, by processes varying with each denomination, he may—strange paradox—create a Father for himself?" Again, the author of the three volumes on "The State of Man after the Coming of Christ"—memorable among small books on great subjects—charges Romanism with being in effect polytheism, on this, among other grounds, that the deep sense of the paternal kindness of the Deity is lost in the Romanist's view of it—mortifications, penances, being considered acceptable to Him, and Christ being separated from the Father no less in His divine than in His human nature; "the latter is looked on as a stern, the former as a merciful, deity; (this, too, by the bye, is the common preaching of *our* pulpits.)"

Let but a man, as Dr. Colani says, be penetrated with the conviction that the Almighty, *le Tout-Pouissant*, without whose will not a hair falls from the head of any one of us, is his Father—*his*—"mon père à moi, mon père qui me cherit"—and then, as a direct consequence, all this man's trial, without exception—a truth hard to understand, but not to believe—are recognised as having for their aim and end his supreme good. Pascal's exclamation, that although the universe might crush him, he should be nobler than it, because aware of his death, is the thought rather of a stoic than of a disciple of Jesus Christ. "What makes me superior to the universe, is not the being conscious of death, but the knowing that the universe belongs to my Father in heaven, and that everything in it tends definitely to my true happiness." M. Jules Simon affirms, from his stand-point of *la religion naturelle*, that whoever will think of family life—its greatness and its sweetness—will need no other proof to satisfy him that the hand which made us is fatherly as well as divine. The sentiment is claimed as a proof, and one that science has neither the right nor the power to rebut. "O God, O Father of the world! Thy providence will for ever be adored and understood in the heart of a father!" Yet, as a contemporary divine of the Broad Church in France exclaims, in illustration of his thesis that when we meditate on a saying of Christ's, we accept it at first because it is His, but anon conscience recognises an eternal verity in it, a necessary truth in it, so that we almost seem less to have found it in the New Testament than in our innermost selves—"Who would have made bold to call God 'Our Father' before Jesus Christ had done so?"

and who does not feel now that this name is the only one suitable to God?"

And even natural religion, by the pen of one of its expositors, has asked, How can we think of God as a Father, and not pray to Him, not ask Him for help, and, indeed, expect to receive it? "Modestly, indeed, as children ask favours of an earthly father, and prepared as modestly for disappointment, knowing His wisdom." Speaking of that paternal discipline which, however wise, it is impossible for children thoroughly to understand, the author of "The Religion of the Heart" goes on to say of them that they discover, as they grow older, that the pain is sometimes good for them, and perhaps that their father means them well always; says, too, that when they come to be fathers themselves, and consider what anxieties he underwent for their welfare, how he may have lain awake to secure them rest, and how his heart bled when he punished them, their love for him becomes entire, and they look back with sorrow for having doubted him, particularly if they find in themselves weaknesses that formerly diminished their reverence.

There is indeed a maudlin religion of nature, which practically makes of a divine Father a doting grandfather; and in behalf of this puling fancy neither facts nor Scripture have a word to say. The spirit of the universe has by some been represented, so their deriders and scoffers put it, as an old lady with a thoroughly well-regulated disposition according to the best English principles, the presiding genius, in short, of a Minerva Academy. Abraham Tucker, in a well-known passage of the "Light of Nature," says that when he was first taught his prayers, he used to have the idea of a venerable old man, of a composed, benign countenance, with his own hair, clad in a morning gown of a grave-coloured flowered damask, sitting in an elbow chair. A mawkish emasculate theology has favoured as worthy of *all* acceptation, adult as well as infantine, this grand-paternal embodiment of a celestial *haus-vater*. But, due allowance made for the infantine stage of the conception, Tucker's childish impression is not to be hastily condemned. He proceeds, himself, to say, that in looking back to these beginnings, he is in no way disturbed at the grossness of his infant theology. The mature theologian maintains that the image thus shaped by the imagination of the child was in truth merely one example of the various forms and conceptions,

fitted to divers states and seasons and orders and degrees of the religious mind whether infant or adult, which represent the several approximations such minds, or minds at such seasons, can respectively make to the completeness of faith. These imperfect ideas, as Sir Henry Taylor argues, should be held to be reconciled and comprehended in that completeness, not rejected by it; and the nearest approximation which the greatest of human minds can accomplish, is surely to be regarded as much nearer to the imperfection of an infantine notion than to the fulness of truth. "The gown of flowered damask and the elbow-chair may disappear; the anthropomorphism of childhood may give place to the divine incarnation of the Second Person in after years; and we may come to conceive of the Deity as Milton did when his epithets were most abstract:

‘So spake the *sovran presence.*’

But after all," adds Mr. Taylor, "these are but different grades of imperfection in the forms of doctrinal faith;" and his conclusion few will impeach, that if there be a devout love on the part of a child for what is picturesque in his imagination as a venerable old man, than in the philosophic poet for the "Sovran Presence," the child's faith has more of the efficacy of religious truth in it than the poet's and philosopher's.

FRANCIS JACOX, B.A.

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## The Preacher's Dissecting Room.

“I SPEAK AS TO WISE MEN.”

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

**J**N our last article on Mr. Beecher as a preacher, we referred to the peculiar danger which besets those who endeavour to treat Holy Scripture in a philosophical way—the danger, viz., of so treating the Scripture discussed as practically to sink it. At the same time it would be sheer fanaticism on this account to deny the existence in certain quarters of a distinct demand and clear use for such a style of discussion. We have a limited re-

spect only for those pulpit exercises which seem to regard the whole of the Bible as an elaborate and complicated arrangement for the bare utterance of one note, like a steeple with one bell. To our minds it is a steeple with many bells, all harmonized, it is true, in one key, and all in tune with the one central and dominant idea of the declaration of the Father through the Son, but all of them requiring to be sounded out in all their wonderful multiplicity of combinations, in order for their fullest beauty to be shown. That profound declaration of the Apostles, that "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid" in Christ Jesus serves to justify this view on the one hand, and to guard it on the other. All the countless treasures of spiritual knowledge are indeed "hid" in Christ, and therefore in those Scriptures which "testify" of Him, something as all the countless treasures of harmony are said to be hid in a perfect peal of eight bells. But who can enjoy those harmonies while thus hid? What are those bells to us while unused? Mere masses of idle metal. It is the hand of the skilful manipulator, previously taught and directed by the genius of the still more skilful composer, which "brings out" on the listening atmosphere, and which even creates, to our apprehension, the wealth of harmony there contained. Very similar are the aim and attainment of the faithful preacher of God's word. He also brings out, according as he is enabled, all the treasures of truth which lie hid in it; he fills the atmosphere of men's thoughts with their sound; and sends them pealing into men's hearts and consciences until they echo again with the sound. But in order to do this effectually, and according to the analogy of faith, there are two opposite extremes which he must be equally careful to avoid. He must not deliberately content himself with any less, he must not aspire to any more, than the treasury places at his disposal. If he do the one he will become monotonous, and teach less than is true—so much less, it may be, as to withhold even more than he gives. If he do the other he will become discordant, and teach that which is false.

We are not prepared to assert that Mr. Beecher ever falls into the latter of these two errors, but we have our fears on the point; and we think that the sermon which we now select as the principal subject of our remarks, will show the reasonableness of our fears. Let the reader judge for himself.

The sermon in question, is entitled "Divine Influence on the Human Soul;" and has the following text at its head: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us [in us] with groanings which cannot

be uttered." After some few preliminary remarks on the great susceptibility of man's nature to external influences, and on the various "secular" influences that are perpetually acting on him, the preacher proceeds to observe,—

"The sacred Scriptures do not limit the influence to secular agents, but teach unmistakably that the soul of man lies open to influences acting beyond the senses, from out the great unknown spirit world. . . . chiefly by the one great and all-creative Spirit, God. . . . We shall spend your time this morning in considering some of the aspects of the revealed fact, that the *Divine mind acts freely upon the human soul*.

"It is impossible for anyone to give forth a whole view of the nature and action of the Divine mind. This is so far beyond the capacity of the human mind, that not only has it never been done, but it never will be done. Nor shall we pretend to give a round and complete philosophy or theory of even so much of divine action as relates to the human soul.

. . . It is only certain limited truths which are either positively known, or which are of so high a degree of probability, as to justify us, in lack of better knowledge, in assuming and using them for practical ends—at least until we grow in knowledge to better views.

"It is taught, then, that besides the general moral influence, unconscious and diffused—as it were distilled, like dew, in silence and darkness, there is an active energy, arousing, filling, impelling the souls of men.

"It is said that the spirit of the Lord came upon judges, that it came upon kings, upon prophets, upon apostles—came mightily and stirred them up. As sudden and mighty winds make trees rock, and wrench them, and even overturn them, so, as by a mighty rushing wind, the spirit of God has descended on men—on Samuel, on David, on Isaiah, on Paul.

"It is taught likewise, that while this energy of the divine mind prepared certain men for emergencies, and prepared them to act official parts, all true Christians, all godly souls, are opening to a quickening influence, if not so mighty yet of the same general kind—an influence which stimulates, assists, ripens and so finally sanctifies.

"Some few suggestions respecting the method of this action, as we derive our knowledge from watching it, from facts, from the side of our own experience, may be turned to practical account."

If this opening be fairly analyzed, what does it amount to? Is it not saying in effect, when expressed in simpler language, The subject of our text is the influence exercised by God's Spirit on the soul of man. Many distinguished scriptural persons are spoken of as having received it in a marvellous manner; and all true Christians are described as being partakers of it in a less conspicuous way. This being the case, let us proceed to consider, for our instruction, not what the present Scripture reveals on the subject, but what we already know of it for ourselves.

Do we imply, therefore, that it is never legitimate to view a Biblical subject from the side of our own experience? Certainly not. The Scripture itself repeatedly invites us so to do. But what we submit is, that an expositor of Scripture would do better to refrain from this method of treatment, except in

accordance with the express invitation or implied sanction of the Word. Had Mr. Beecher, for example, been preaching on the passage, "Thou bearest the sound thereof," the line of inquiry he proposes would have been directly sanctioned by his text; and he might have proceeded, with perfect propriety, and on the authority of Christ Himself, to inquire, as he does afterwards here, how the influences of the Spirit are to be perceived and distinguished. But under present circumstances he seems to make the inquiry on his own authority alone; and we feel inclined to ask the question, "Who hath required this at your hands?" Some may regard this, perhaps, as over-criticism; but we cannot agree with them. Every allowance, of course, must be made for those preachers who, through great pressure and variety of labour, have to produce sermons and discourses "at the shortest notice" for the same body of hearers every seven (or fewer) days in the year. It is impossible for any men in such circumstances to attain even their own standard of what is best at all times—if at any. But the standard which ought to be aimed at remains, for all that, where it was, viz., very decidedly above the range of a sermon which does not suit its own text. What should we say of a theorem in geometry which enunciated one thing and then demonstrated another?

That this illustration is not really beyond the truth in the present instance our next extracts will show us. According to the preacher's observation and experience, the Divine influence he refers to is not—

"Creative in any such sense as that it creates new faculties, or products that have in them no ministration of faculty [?]. We have no reason to suppose, or to teach, that the Spirit of God sets aside the action of a man's own mind, that it constrains that action to unwonted channels, or that it produces results in the mind without making use of the faculties which were appointed for such results. . . . So far as we can judge by a large induction of facts, there is no action of the divine mind upon the human, except in the line of already established powers and faculties. There is no result produced, except such as can be produced by arousing the faculties already there to extraordinary power and efficiency. So that the divine mind is not attempting to make up something that is lacking in the structure of the human mind, but simply seeking to develop latent energy in powers that are already provided. It amounts to giving man the benefit of the whole power of his own mind—in a sublime way, to be sure, but somewhat after the manner in which a teacher helps his pupil. How? Not by thinking for him, nor in a literal sense thinking in him; but by bringing the stimulating power of his thinking part to bear upon the child's, and waking up his dormant capacity, and making the child think—not dispossessing the child's intellectual nature, nor working out results without the instrumentality of the child's nature, but simply making the child use its nature to accomplish the things desired.

"The whole history of the Bible will show that those great names, pre-eminent as being inspired, were acting most perfectly in the line of their

own original endowments when they were most inspired. In other words a man is never so much himself as when he is acting under the influence of the Divine Spirit; as when the Divine Spirit is shed forth, and exerts itself upon the human mind, to bring the man up to the fulness of all that which he has, but which he does not avail himself of.

"Do you suppose that any other man could have been called to do Moses' work? He was called from birth. In other words he was organized to be Moses."

So of David, Isaiah, and Paul.

"Paul was called to be the chiefest apostle, because he was, from his mother's womb, the chiefest man."

Here is truth, we fully believe, and a kind of truth which requires to be insisted on, because it is so often overlooked by fanatical spirits; but the question is as to how far it is the truth of the text. No doubt these holy and mysterious influences do run to a great extent in the line of a man's powers, and do "educate" and draw out the capabilities which they find already existing in the soil of man's nature. The metaphor, therefore, which (afterwards) compares these influences to the sunshine, is right and true enough so far as it goes. Just as the streaming sunshine, aided, of course, by the showers, may be said to create the plant with all its beauty by drawing it out from the soil of the garden in which it already existed in an unformed and unconscious condition, so the spiritual influences of the Gospel, when man's nature is opened to them, do produce by drawing out much that was already in existence there, only unconscious and unformed. But we must not be misled by a metaphor, however striking and just. It is not the sunshine by itself; it is not the sunshine and showers together, unaided by anything else, that produce this result; but it is the light and warmth of the one, combined with the moisture of the other, operating together on a soil which has been properly prepared for their influence, and in which a seed of life has been sown. If we would speak, therefore, of spiritual influence as it is spoken of in Holy Writ, there is a work of preparation to be noticed, as well as one of production; something implanted, as well as something educed; power instilled and conveyed, as well as power awakened and aroused. Further, of the two kinds of power thus distinguished, it is the former kind almost exclusively which seems referred to in the present scripture. It is something beside, beyond, and above us of which it assures us—an intercession, indeed, made "in us," but made "for us," as well—"groanings which cannot be uttered" by ourselves, but which are uttered, and uttered "for us" on that very account. Such, or rather such approximately—for we do not pretend, of course,

in half a-dozen words to explore and explain the world of experimental religion here revealed—seems to be the purport of our text. But if so, how far does the present sermon adhere to it? Is not the discourse conspicuous, rather, for the completeness with which it turns away from this purport to another? There are two principal divisions of spiritual influence. Does not the text speak of the one kind, and the sermon of the other? St Paul describes how the “Spirit helps our infirmities.” Does not the preacher labour to explain how the Spirit gives assistance to our strength!

But we do not think this is all. Let the reader ponder the next extract, and see the nature of some of the conclusions to which he is brought. At page 275 we read thus:—

“But you will say: Are there not cases in which another law has been followed; as for instance, when the disciples were enjoined, on being arrested and brought before magistrates and kings, ‘Do not premeditate in that hour what ye shall say; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall say.’ How was it given them? I apprehend that it was given them only in this way, that when a man is living in a high moral state all the time, and is brought suddenly into an emergency, under the stimulus of that emergency, as well as under the divine blessing, luminous intuitions *are given to him*. He does not need to study past histories in that hour. The intuitions of right and duty are spontaneous under such circumstances. I do not apprehend that the disciples in the day of Pentecost had given to them more of this than is given to men in our day who live as high as they lived, and whose souls are open to the impulsion of the divine spirit as much as theirs was. As the solar sun develops growth in the earth, so the influence of God develops growth in the human soul.”

Surely this is something more than mere divergence from the text. If it were not for the qualifying clause, “as well as under the Divine blessing,” we should have described it as direct denial. For ourselves, we regard that limitation as practically nullifying the whole explanation; and we believe that all our readers will see that for themselves. But the meaning of the writer himself, as gathered from the way he sums up, is simply to the effect that the disciples on the Day of Pentecost had nothing more of spiritual influence than all other Christian men either have or may expect. They were in such a position and condition that the sun of God’s Spirit shone full on them, and “drew them out,” consequently, in such a manner that their natural energies were enabled to accomplish their very best. This, he implies, is the only mode in which they had anything “given to them.” Thus it is he explains (away) the Scripture of his text.

At the same time, in some portions of this sermon, there is much power and great truth. To some of these portions, both

on this account, and also because they will serve as a starting-point for discussing another most important characteristic of Mr. Beecher's style, we hope in our next article to advert.

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## Biblical Criticism.

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come [בָּאָה חִמְתַּת כָּל-הָנָדִים] : and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.”—Haggai ii. 6, 7.

Is the above passage Messianic ? Is it a prophecy ? And does that prophecy refer to Christ ? Some will answer in the negative, especially those who sympathise with the new Rationalistic German school of exegesis. But the question for us to consider is whether there is any sufficient reason for departure from the interpretation of the passage furnished in our authorised version. We certainly think not.

Now the whole matter in dispute turns upon the meaning to be attached to the word *חִמְתַּת*, *chēmdāh*. What is its signification, and to what object does it refer ? According to Fürst, *chēmdah*, from *חִמַּד*, *chāmād*, “to strive, seek after, desire,” means *desire, wish, delight, object of desire*. So far, good. It is evident that in some specific application of the terms, the Hebrew is not incorrectly rendered “the *desire of all nations*.”

To what object, then, does the word *חִמְתַּת*, *chēmdāh*, refer itself ? Is that object a person, or a mere thing ? And if a person—what person ?

Hitzig renders the passage thus :—“*Herbeikommen die edelsten aller Völker.*” (LXX.) *Tα ἐνλειπτα πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν.* “All,” he says, “are shaken, but only the relatively best among them give glory to God.” He next rejects the interpretation which would make *חִמְתַּת* (translated by *Kostbarkeit* *preciousness* or *sumptuousness*) mean “the treasures of all the heathen—*die*

*Schätze aller Heiden.*" For then the stat. constr. receives a real substratum other than the genitive. Besides, in such case it would have read **כל-חִמְרָת הַנוּם**. "Much rather," adds Hitzig, "is **חִמְרָת**, *chēmdāh*, a synonyme of **מִבְחָרָה**, *mībhchār*."

Here, then, the words rendered in our version "the desire of all nations" is made to mean "the noblest from among all nations." The word *chēmdāh* is made to have a personal reference, not, however, to Christ, but only to those among all nations who by the tremendous commotions described in the 6th verse, should be stirred up to greater liberality in the service of God. "It is self-evident," adds Hitzig, "that the heathen would not appear with empty hands. Therefore also the statement in the second clause of the verse; while verse 8 indicates wherein such **כְּבוֹד khēbhōd** or *glory*, shall consist, namely, in sacred oblations of gold and silver."\*

Maurer, however, disputes this view of the passage. He thinks that without sufficient reason Hitzig synonymizes **חִמְרָת** with **מִבְחָרָה**, and that the sense of the passage is not "et venient nobilissimi omnium populorum." Maurer renders the passage thus:—"Et commovebo omnes populos, et venient [afferentur] deliciae [res pretiosissimae], omnium populorum, et implebo domum hanc splendore, inquit Jova exercituum."†

Here Maurer understands by the word **חִמְרָת**, *chēmdāh deliciae*—the *delights*, *res pretiosissimae*—*dona pretiosissima*—the most precious things—the most precious gifts, which all peoples would bring into the temple of Jehovah.

But to both these interpretations insuperable objections must be urged. In what way could the advent to the second temple of "the noblest out of all nations" justify the prediction that "the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former?" Hitzig says that the pre-eminence of the latter would consist in its silver and gold—which as oblations and offerings

\* "Von selbst aber versteht es sich, das die Heiden nicht mit leeren Händen erscheinen; daher die Aussage im 2 Versgl. V. 8. Sodann deutet an, worin solches **כְּבוֹד** bestehen werde, nämlich in goldenen und silbernen Weihgeschenken."—*Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten erklärt von F. Hitzig, Ph. D., D. D. Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handb. zum Alten Testament, Leipzig, 1838, S. 287.*

† *Commentarius Gramm. Crit. in Vet. Test. scripsit F. J. V. D. Maurer, Ph. D., Vol. II., pp. 613, 614, Lipsiae, 1833.*

those coming out of all nations would bring into it. And according to Maurer that pre-eminence was to consist in the self-same thing. But how does this accord with the prophecy and with fact? In the very contents of the prophecy itself this exegesis is overthrown. For there (Haggai ii. 3) the inferiority of the second temple in these very particulars is expressly affirmed. "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" This confession occurs in close connection with the passage under discussion; and, as so occurring, it clearly proves that it was no such "glory" as this to which the prophecy looked forwards. Cf. Ezra iii. 12.

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(*To be continued.*)

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## The Preacher's Finger-Post.

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### CHRIST AN UNCONVENTIONAL BUT A MODEL PREACHER.

"For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."—Matt. vii. 29.

THE Scribes were in some respects in Judea, what the Episcopal clergymen are in England, the nationally recognised religious teachers. They were the accepted interpreters and administrators of God's will to men. When Christ came as a teacher He utterly disregarded their system of teaching, and pursued a didactic course, strikingly original and contrasting. His hearers felt this and said, "Never man spake like this man." In many respects the

character of Christ as a preacher stands in striking and suggestive contrast to the conventional religious teachers of this age of all churches. Notwithstanding this I hold Him to be the *model* preacher. Preachers want models as well as the artist, the statesman and the author, but who is he to take as his exemplar? Augustine, Chrysostom, Baxter, Whitfield, Chalmers, Robertson, I venerate these men as popular administrators of Divine truth, but none of them are perfect models. They had many excellencies, but they had also many defects. Jesus of Nazareth is the grand and only perfect ideal.

I. He was a model as to the **MATTER** of His teaching, which was *unconventional*, "and not as the scribes." The scribes, the conventional teachers, taught dry law, moral and ritualistic, and also the traditions of their fathers that often made void the commandments of God. But what was the grand subject of Christ's teaching? Not systems either of law or doctrine: the grand subject of His teaching was Himself. *Christ taught Christ.* He constantly projected Himself in all His utterances, "I and my Father are one." "I am the Bread of Life." "I am the door." "I am the good shepherd." "I am the resurrection and the life." "I am the way, the truth, and the light." No less, I think, than thirty times does Christ represent the happiness of man as depending on faith in Him as a living personality. In a mere human teacher this would be insufferable egotism, but in Him it was proper and incumbent. First: He had nothing *higher* to represent than himself. "In Him dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily." For Him to have discussed philosophic theories or scientific discoveries, or theological systems would have been more undignified than for the world's greatest sage, to spend his time in playing with an infant's toy. He was greater than the universe and

He knew it. Secondly: He had nothing that the world *required* more than Himself. Souls wanted Christ as the sun, without which their moral firmament would remain in midnight, as the bread and water without which they would spiritually die. Now this must be our theme. He preached Himself, we must not do that, but must preach Him, We must endeavour to catch the rays of His glory and flash them upon the intellect and consciences of men. We must determine to know "nothing amongst men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The world wants Christ not creeds. It can do without theories of bread but it will perish without the bread itself.

II. He was a model as to the **MANNER** of His teaching which was *unconventional*, "and not as the scribes." There were it is true some things in His manner which were peculiar to Himself, and which *ought not* to be imitated. There is for example His *positiveness*. His teaching is made up of positive assertion. He does not go into proof, He does not argue, He dictates, seldom debates, and the reason of this was obvious. He dealt in first principles and first principles lie beyond the realms of proof. So congruous are they with human consciousness as to require no further proof. It is not for us to dogmatize. There is

again His *self assurance*. He never seemed to have any diffidence or any consciousness of insufficiency. He was always ready. He never prefaced a discourse by an apology. His self sufficiency arose from a perfection of knowledge. He was able to sound the depths of thought, and span every question: He was the Master of every theme He touched. Self sufficiency in mere human teachers always grows out of ignorance. But there are features in His method which require imitation. There was, First: *Naturalness*. He was natural not in the sense of coarseness. An ethereal delicacy pervaded everything He said or did. Not in the sense of *unculturedness*, for His faculties were well disciplined, but in the sense of genuine simplicity. How free from art were His thoughts and His language. There was nothing of the technical scholar in the structure of His utterances, nor of the sanctimonious priest in the form of His addresses. He did not formulate His thoughts by any logical rules, or adorn them with any rhetorical ornament, I refer His wonderful *freshness*, to His naturalness. The words of Christ were always new. His sermons charioted His hearers into new realms, into fresh scenes of green pastures and living streams. Even the ideas which had been uttered before by Hebrew

prophets and heathen sages when they came from Him were fresh. He moulded them into new forms, breathed into them new life, and gave them a new voice to startle the dormant faculties of mankind. He cut a new channel for the world's thought, ever widening and ever deepening, and threw into it new sentiments that shall one day flood society with a new light. Nature is always fresh, art is monotonous. How different the flower painted on the canvas to the flower in the landscape, how different the cedar towering in the forest, to the cedar cut down, carved and polished, to adorn some lordly mansion. In nature the flower and the tree are ever fresh, in art they are monotonous. So great is the difference between a natural and artificial. The conventional teachers in Judea were artificial, and to a great extent are they not so in England? There was, Secondly: *Suggestiveness*. His sentences were not only charged with thought, but created thought. There was more religious thinking in the three years of His preaching in Judea than there had been for centuries before. He set the wheels of the national intellect agoing. His *definiteness* tended much to suggest thoughts. He generally had but one point at a time. He did not attempt to press into His sermon as men do now, all "the doctrines of grace." No

teaching is equal to suggestive teaching. The man who attempts to cram the brains of his hearers with his own dogmas is no teacher. Such dogmas will rest in the mind as undigested food in the stomach, only to generate disease. There was, Thirdly: *Tenderness*. His treatment of the woman taken in adultery, His tears over the grave of Lazarus, His wail over the doomed city, His last conversation with His disciples, His reference to His mother on the cross, all indicate His tenderness. His tenderness was not weakness but strength. It was the sap in the oak. His tears were the exudation of moral force. It was the tenderness that could roll the thunders of faithful rebuke as well as breathe the words of soothing sympathy and hope. This tenderness is what we want. Tenderness is the soul of eloquence, &c. There was, Fourthly: *Faithfulness*. Though poor, friendless, despised and persecuted, He stands erect before the greatest men of His age; confronts them, and spares them not. He takes off their mask and brings out into light their long hidden sins. The voice which whispered in accents of love to His disciples, "Let not your hearts be troubled," resounded in thunder elsewhere. He had no soft and courtly forms of speech for the respectable of His country—the Pharisees, Scribes, Lawyers, &c.: without

mincing, in broad vernacular, and with the emphasis of honest indignation. He told them what they were:—"a wicked generation," "whited sepulchres," "fools," &c. He treated pretence as infamy; seeming sanctity as a damning crime.\* There was, Fifthly: *Consistency*. His doctrines were drawn out in living characters. His life confirmed what his lips declared. There was, Sixthly: *Devoutness*. He was ever full of the great idea of God, and therefore ever full of the spirit of prayer and worship. How often He retires to some secluded spot to pray. God filled the horizon of His soul, and sunned and warmed its atmosphere. Herein is speaking power. Sermons are mere intellectual productions until they are bathed in the current of devout reflections.

**CONCLUSION.**—Brothers! How far is the conventional pulpit of England in agreement with the character of Christ as a preacher? The measure of its dissimilarity is the measure of its iniquity and weakness. Christ must be our model both in matter and in manner. Let us preach Him with that naturalness, suggestiveness, tenderness, faithfulness, consistency, devoutness, which characterized all His discourses.

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\* For a fuller amplification on the points in this article, see "Genius of the Gospel," pp. 118—127.

APOSTOLIC PIETY AND  
PSYCHOLOGY.

"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth,) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth,) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."—2 Cor. xii. 2—4.

**REMARK** on the context. The verses themselves present two subjects.

**I. PSYCHOLOGY.** These words reveal certain ideas which Paul had concerning the human mind. There is no subject more important or more profitable for study than that of mind. Works on mental philosophy abound, but as yet no universally accepted theory. We have the sensational, the idealistic, the eclectic, and the mystical schools still contending amongst us for supremacy. What is Paul's idea of mind? Judging from these words he regarded it as capable of acting independent of the body; not only *after death*, but even *here during its sojourn in the corporeal frame*. The words imply that he held the idea—First: *That while here it is capable of existing separate from the body*. "Whether in the body I cannot tell: or whether out of the body I cannot tell." If he had been cer-

tain that the soul could not exist, whilst here, apart from the body would he have spoken thus? He believed in its capability of going forth from the body and having experiences in which the body need not participate. And who is not conscious of such a power? What are those mental moods which we call revelry, abstraction, transport, ecstacy? Does not the soul often seem to live in scenes remote from the spot in which the body is located? Paul speaks of himself as entering into regions far away. (1.) The third heaven. The Bible speaks of three heavens: (a.) The atmospheric, where the clouds travel and perform their functions; (b.) the starry heavens, where the sun and moon and stars appear; and (c.) the heavens that lie beyond the heavenly orbs, where God and His holy angels are supposed to have their special residence. Up to this "third heaven" Paul was "caught"—borne away. (2.) Paradise. "Caught up into paradise." This word occurs three times in the New Testament.\* It denotes here some place in the universe, distinguished in beauty and fruitfulness from all other places, as the highest cultured *parterres*, from the wild, sterile, and uncultivated other parts of the earth. Paul regarded it possible for the soul to go away

\* Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. ii. 7.

from the body into those distant regions of supernal brightness and beauty. Who has not been conscious of being borne far away from the body on the wings of thought? The soul of the emigrant hovers over the land of his birth, whilst his body is a thousand leagues away. How often does some event occur in our history which seizes the soul, and bears it away to distant scenes! Another idea which Paul seems to have of mind is, Secondly: That whilst here it is capable of receiving extraordinary revelations apart from the body. "Heard unspeakable words." The highest ecstacies of the heart are ever unrevealable. Heart raptures cannot be translated into the language of the intellect. Things of the soul may be unutterable either from necessity, or from impropriety. Perhaps what Paul saw and heard in his spirit was neither possible or proper to communicate. There are but few of us who have not received impressions of distant things. There are some wonderful cases on record. "In the life of Dr. Francis Wayland," says a modern writer, "we find the following incident:—When on a certain occasion he was expected home from New York, after attending medical lectures there, during the winter of 1814-15, Mrs. Wayland, his mother, who was sitting with her husband, suddenly walked the room in great agitation,

saying, 'Pray for my son: Francis is in danger.' So urgent was her request, that her husband joined her in prayer for his deliverance from peril. At the expected time he returned. His mother at once asked, 'What has taken place?' It appeared, at the time of an agitation, while coming up the North River on a sloop, that Francis had fallen overboard, and the sloop passed over him. He was an athletic swimmer, and readily kept himself afloat until he could be rescued." It is recorded that a certain woman started from her sleep at midnight, and exclaimed, "O God, my husband is lost." Subsequent facts show that the ship in which her husband sailed went down at that very moment. In wars, mothers have been known when hundreds of miles away from the scene of the slaughter, to know the precise spot where their sons have fallen, the character of their wounds, the time of their death: and all prove true to fact. Instances abound of persons telling the death of friends hundreds of miles away. The circumstances and exact time have all proved true. In fact we are often caught away to distant scenes and see and hear extraordinary things. Another idea which Paul seems to have of mind is, Thirdly: That whilst here it may exist and act apart from the body and the man not know it. "Whether in the

body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth." He was so charged with spiritual feelings, so absorbed with spiritual revelations that he lost all consciousness of matter and his relations to it. One great Divine thought, one grand spiritual passion can bury sun and moon, throw earth and heaven out of sight. The man whose soul is flooded with the higher elements of being, does not know for the time whether he is in the body or out of the body. The traveller in his excursions may be so absorbed with the grand and the picturesque in nature, that he may for a time forget the old house that he calls his home. Another idea which Paul seems to have of mind is, Fourthly: That wherever or however it exists, it *constitutes the man*. "I knew a *man in Christ*." That which had these wonderful revelations he regarded as the man. Everywhere does the Apostle express this truth. To him the body was the costume of the man, which he put on at birth and took off at death; the house in which he lived, the earthly tabernacle, the glass through which he looked. In fact he regarded the body as his, not him, the soul as himself, that which would thrive and grow when the outer man decayed.

II. PIETY. There are three things concerning piety here. First: *Humility*. That the man

of whom Paul here speaks is himself, scarcely admits of doubt. In the seventh verse the veil of disguise is withdrawn and Paul appears as the "man." Why he should speak of himself in the third person is because of that modesty of nature which is ever the characteristic of truly great souls. The greater the man the less egotistic. Self-consciousness is the infirmity of minor men. Humility is an essential attribute of piety. Another thing concerning piety. Secondly: *Christism*. "A man in Christ." To be "in Christ" is to live in His ideas, character, spirit, as the atmosphere of being. Men everywhere are living in the ideas and character of others. He who lives in the spirit of Raphael becomes a painter, he who lives in the spirit of Milton becomes a poet, he who lives in the spirit of Bacon becomes a philosopher, he who lives in the spirit of Cæsar becomes a warrior, he who lives in the spirit of Christ becomes a *Man*. Another thing concerning piety is—Thirdly: *Transport*. His soul was borne away in ecstasy. The time when the revelation occurred is specified—"fourteen years ago." Probably the revelation is the one that occurred to him mentioned in Acts xxii. 17. Strange that he did not speak of it before. Piety has its hours of ravishments, ecstacies, and transfigurations; its hours when it exclaims, "It is good to be here," &c., when it

knows not whether it is "in the body or out of the body."

CONCLUSION.—Reverence thy nature. How great, how wonderful. Let spiritual interests be held supreme. Let our relations to the invisible and the eternal be practically realized in our daily life. Let our souls be thrown open to the transporting influence of God's truth and love.

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#### THE DEATH OF THE GOOD A REASON FOR JOY.

"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father."—John xiv. 29.

THERE are three things connected with this verse which strike us at the outset. First: The view which Christ had of his death. "I go away"—"I go unto the Father." Whence does he go? From this world where he had been so wickedly treated, &c. Whither does He go? To "the Father." Not to *destruction*, not to eternal solitude, not to fellowship with minor souls. But to "the Father." How does He go? He is not *driven*, He is not forced against His will. "I go." Other men are sent to the grave. Christ went—freely went. Secondly: The sadness of His disciples at the prospect of His death. The twelve were with Him now on the eve of His crucifixion and sorrow filled their hearts—the sorrow of sympathy, the sorrow of fear.

They were troubled, and no wonder. Thirdly: The consolatory thought which He here addresses to them. That was, that he was going to His Father, going into the happiest conceivable state, into conscious fellowship with Infinite Love. The text contains three general truths.

I. THAT GENUINE LOVE REJOICES IN THE HAPPINESS OF ITS OBJECT. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice." The love that is more ready to weep with those that weep, than rejoice with those that rejoice, is not of the genuine type. It is of the essence of true love to yearn after, to struggle for, and to rejoice in, the happiness of its object. To make happy is the supreme wish of love. This fact is so true to our consciousness that it requires no proof. Its illustrations are manifold. It finds its illustrations—First: In the *creation*. Whence sprung the universe? From love. Love created in order to diffuse happiness. Love rejoices in the happiness of the creation. Secondly: In *Christ's Mission*. Christ came into the world to make happy the objects of infinite love. He was love's Messenger to banish the sufferings of humanity, and to fill the world with heavenly joy. Thirdly: In *Christian labour*. The strongest wish of all Christian souls, the great end of all Christian labour, is *to make people happy*. Happiness is the grand end of all true Church

work. Another general truth contained in the passage is—

**II. THAT THE HAPPINESS OF MEN DEPENDS UPON FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER.** “I go to the Father.” “In thy presence if fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” It is as impossible for the human soul constituted as it is to enjoy happiness apart from God as it is for the stream to flow on cut off from the fountain, the tree to grow uprooted from the soil, the star to shine severed from its great centre orb. The Infinite Father is the fountain of all true joy. First: *Happiness is in love.* Where there is no love there can be no-happiness. Secondly: *The love to produce happiness must be directed to the Father.* His perfection delights it, His goodness reciprocates it. Thirdly: *Love for the Father yearns for fellowship with Him.* Love always craves for the presence of its object. The happiness of the soul is to be with the Father. The great end of Christ's mediation was that “the Lord God might dwell amongst men.” Another general truth contained in the passage is—

**III. THAT DEATH INTRODUCES THE GOOD INTO A SPECIALLY CLOSE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER.** “I go unto the Father.” But had He not always been with the Father? Yes; but there had been obstructions to the *closest* fellowship. What were they?

First: There was *the body with its infirmities.* His body was as it were a material veil which lay between Him and the Infinite Father. His hungerings, thirstings, fatigues, tended no doubt to interrupt the fellowship. Secondly: There was *the sinful condition of the world in which He lived.* The evils of falsehoods, dishonesties, impieties, blasphemies, which crowded the moral atmosphere of the age in which He lived tended, no doubt, to interfere with His fellowship with the Father. Thirdly: There was *the influence of the principalities and powers of darkness.* Satan, the prince of the power of the air, never perhaps deserted Him, assailing Him at every point of His soul. Though he could not tempt Him yet he teased Him. No doubt, therefore, His fellowship with God here was interrupted. Now all these things interrupt the fellowship of the good man with God here. He (1) has the body with its thick veil intervening, he has (2) a sinful world whose exhalations darken his moral sky, he has (3) Satanic influence pressing him away from the Father. But, in connection with all this, the godly man has something more. He has what Christ had not—(4) worldly cares, (5) inward depravity, (6) corrupt habits. At death however, these things are removed, the soul

passes away from the material and corrupt into the immediate presence of its God.

**CONCLUSION:**—We need not sorrow for the departed good. Indeed, if we love them, we ought to rejoice because they have gone to the Father. They are with their Father. Away from clouds and storms, and enemies, they are “for ever with the Lord.”

#### FELLOWSHIP IN DEATH.

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”—Luke xxiii. 46.

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”—Acts vii. 59.

**I. FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING.** They died by the hands of violent, malignant, thorough, determined foes.

**II. FELLOWSHIP OF VISION.** Jesus saw His Father. Stephen saw Jesus. How near is heaven to the holy! What strength and concentration of vision!

**III. FELLOWSHIP OF PITY.** “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Pitiful prayers for murderers,

is the proof of divinest grace which angels have ever seen.

**IV. FELLOWSHIP OF ATTITUDE.** With bounding might and “loud” voices the last enemy was confronted and destroyed.

**V. FELLOWSHIP OF BURIAL.** Devout duty to the dead. This is the work of the living. Let us bury our friends reverently. They have an undying history. Let us bury our friends *sympathetically*. They ask a brother's interest. Let us bury our friends *hopefully*. They have a lasting destiny.

**LESSONS.**—1. This precious coincidence is surely not accidental. 2. Here is a proof of the true humanity of Jesus Christ. We wonder less that Stephen was like the Saviour than that the Saviour was so like Stephen. 3. How completely one are the Lord and His people. “Thou shalt be with me.” With Him heaven is not only near but accessible. 4. Fellowship with Jesus Christ in life is the surest guarantee of His presence in death.

H. T. MILLER.

*Liverpool.*

“I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.”—Phil. iv. 11.

HERE we have, I. **LIFE'S VICISSITUDES.** “Whatever state.” Paul had many states. (2 Cor. xi. 23—28.) Life is always winding, chequered, changeful. It has been compared to an April day. II. **LIFE'S GREATNESS.** “Therewith to be content.” Contentment is not *insensibility*. There are some men constitutionally hard and impassive. Their nerves are leather and their blood is ice; this is not contentment, nor is it *indifferentism*. It is cordial acquiescence in the Divine discipline of life. He is the great man who is undaunted in danger and serene in storms. III. **LIFE'S SCHOLARSHIP.** “I have learned.” This contentment is not a gift of nature; it is an attainment. It is to be learnt. No scholarship equal to this. Contentment is a higher diploma than any of your University distinctions.

## Seeds of Sermons on the Book of Proverbs.

### WEALTH IN RELATION TO CHARACTER.

"There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise: but a foolish man spendeth it up."—Prov. xxi. 20.

MEN make a great mistake when they suppose that things that are good for some are equally good for others. It is the character of the man that determines the value of things to him. What would be a blessing to one man would be a curse to another. Intellect, genius, wealth, these are of no service to a man without pure loves and noble aims, but the reverse. What boots a musical instrument in a man's house, if neither he nor his household have either the science or the soul of music? These remarks are suggested by the text which implies that wealth is desirable for the good, but undesirable for the wicked.

I. **IT IS DESIRABLE FOR THE GOOD.** "There is treasure to be desired, and oil in the dwelling of the wise." Wealth "in the dwelling of the wise" is a good thing, a thing to be rejoiced in, not only by its possessor but by his neighbours and by the world at large. First: *He will get out of it good to his own soul.* To him it will not be a golden chain fastening him to the material, but a pinion to bear him into the sunny realms of spiritual freedom. It is said that the Duke of Brunswick is

confined in Paris by the fear of losing his wealth, which consists of an extraordinary collection of diamonds, valued at nearly half a million. These diamonds keep him in chains. He dares not sleep away a single night. There he lives, in a house constructed, not so much for comfort as for security. It is burglar-proof; surrounded on every side by a high wall; the wall itself is surmounted by a lofty iron railing, defended by innumerable sharp spearheads, which are so contrived, that if any person touches one of them, a chime of bells begins instantly to ring an alarm: this iron railing cost him £2,821. He keeps his diamonds in a thick wall; his bed is placed against it, that no burglar may break into it without killing, or at least waking him, and that he may amuse himself without leaving his bed. The safe is lined with granite and with iron; if it is opened by violence, a discharge of firearms, which will inevitably kill the burglar, takes place, and at the same time a chime of bells in every room in the house is set ringing. He has but one window in his bedroom; the sash of the stoutest iron, and cannot be entered unless one be master of the secret combination of the lock. A case of a dozen six-barrelled revolvers, loaded and capped, lies upon a table within reach of his

bed. A great fortune, said Seneca—and he spoke from experience, for he is said to have been worth £3,000,000—is a great slavery; to the true, generous, and godly soul, however, wealth has no such manacling power. On the contrary, it becomes the means of widening the soul's sphere of action, and stimulating its love of freedom. His gold is not a prison to confine him, but a vessel to bear him abroad into new climes. Secondly: *He will use it for good to others.* He will employ it to ameliorate the material distresses of men. With it he will feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and heal the sick. With it he will promote the mental advancement of men. He will rear schools, employ teachers, and multiply agencies for advancing the mental culture of the race. He will not neglect the spiritual interests of mankind. He will build churches, multiply copies of the Scriptures, and promote the ministry of the Holy Word. In a world like ours what good a rich man may do with his wealth! Hence "treasure is to be *desired* and oil in the dwelling of the wise." The text implies that wealth

**II. IS UNDESIRABLE FOR THE WICKED.** "But a foolish man spendeth it up." "Foolish" is the synonym for wicked. It is implied that the wicked often come into the possession of wealth, for they cannot spend it unless they have it. As a rule, perhaps the wicked in the world possess a larger amount of wealth than the good. They get it by fraud and violence, and sometimes by fortune. Not unfrequently, indeed, do they come

in possession of the property once held by the good. Perhaps Solomon here has a reference to that. Elsewhere, at any rate, he alludes to it. "Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity." (Eccl. ii. 18, 19.) But however he may come in possession of it, it is of no real service to him. "He spendeth it up." This may mean either, First: *That he spendeth it upon himself.* This he generally does. He lays it all out to pamper his appetites, and gratify his lusts. He often spends it all upon himself, and thus buries his soul in bloated animalism. This may mean, Secondly: *He squanders it away.* How often do wicked men by their extravagancies and gamblings dissipate large fortunes! And sometimes by their very greed they do so. As *Æsop's* dog, who, having a piece of meat in his mouth, and espying the shadow thereof in the water, thinking it had been another piece of flesh, snatched at it, and, through his greedy desire, lost that which he before had. Even so rich men, who might peacefully and quietly enjoy the goods they have, and with pleasure the fruits of their labours, by their covetous humour they deprive themselves wholly thereof, and setting before their eyes a fraudulent and deceitful hope of things that seem to be good, forget for the

most part those things that are good indeed.

CONCLUSION.—Rejoice in the wealth of the good, covet not the wealth of the wicked. “If a rich man,” says Socrates, “is proud of his wealth, he should not be praised until it is known how he spends it.”

“Young was I once, and poor, now rich and old;  
A harder case than mine was never told;  
Blest with the power to use them—I had none;  
Loaded with riches now, the power is gone.”

ANTIPHILUS.

#### THE TRUE PURSUIT OF MANKIND.

“He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.”—Prov. xxi. 21.

MAN is made for action, his health and his happiness depend upon the development of his activities. Inaction is *ennui*, is death. The development of his active powers require an object of pursuit set before him calculated to stimulate his desires, and at the same time command the approval of his conscience. An object of pursuit sufficient to excite and harmoniously develop all the activities of human nature must be characterized by three things. (1.) Must agree with the sense of right. Men will not throw their full being into a work that clashes with that imperishable sense of rectitude which heaven has planted in human nature. (2.) Must agree with the necessary conditions of physical comfort. The object must be great enough to allow a man full scope for that industry and skill by which physical subsistence and secular comforts are attained. (3.) Must be everlastingly interesting. The object must

keep up man’s interest from day to day, year to year, age to age, as long as he exists. If the interest wanes, his energies will collapse. Where is such an object of pursuit to be found? It is in the Bible, it is in the text.

I. GOODNESS IS THE OBJECT. “He that followeth after righteousness and mercy.” These two words represent universal excellence. “Righteousness” means giving every one his due, doing justice to all. There is a justice man owes himself. He should properly train his own faculties, discipline his own affections, guard his own rights. There is a justice which man owes his fellow creatures; and there is a justice which he owes his God. He is bound to love Him with all his heart, and to serve Him with all his energy. “Mercy” is love. There may be love without mercy, because it may exist without knowledge of suffering; but there is no mercy without love—and “love is the fulfilling of the law.” “God is love,” and without “love or charity we are nothing.” Now, this goodness, consisting in rectitude and love, is to be the grand object of human pursuit. We are to follow after this (first) supremely. It is to be the greatest thing in our horizon; it is to be the goal in the race of life. “I follow after,” says Paul, “if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God

in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 12—14.) We are to follow after this (secondly) *constantly*. It must be pursued, not occasionally, but always; not on the Sundays, but on the week days as well; not in occasional seasons of worship, but in all departments of business. It is to be the *one thing*. As the motherly life runs through all the various departments of motherly history, so this moral life must permeate and rule all our daily life.

II. **HAPPINESS IS THE ATTENDANT.** "Findeth life, righteousness and honour." "He findeth life." Life stands for happiness frequently in the Bible. "Eternal life," in the New Testament, means eternal blessedness. The unregenerate has no true life: to have true life is to have true happiness. He "findeth righteousness." The righteous man will be righteously dealt with. The measure he has meted to others will be measured to him again. He "findeth honour." God has established such a connection between excellence and conscience, that conscience must reverence it wherever seen. Take the three words "life, righteousness, honour," as representing *happiness*, then you have the idea that happiness comes as goodness is pursued. It does not come because the man is seeking it, but because he is seeking goodness as an end; it flows in upon him at every step. This is the true doctrine. Happiness never comes to man when he seeks it as an end. (1.) The constitution of our nature shows this. Happiness whence comes it? It wells out of those activities which spring from generous self obviating love.

(2.) The experience of man shows this. Who have been the truly happy men? The unselfish and the loving. (3.) The word of God shows this. "He that loseth his life shall find it." "The pure in heart shall see God." The man is "blessed in his deeds."

**CONCLUSION.**—Is not happiness the end of the universe? Yes. Did not God intend us to be happy? Yes. But He has ordained that our happiness shall grow out of our goodness. To be happy is to be good; to be good is to be like Himself.

#### THE MARCH OF THE GOOD.

"A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof."—Prov. xxi. 22.

The sentiment of this verse Solomon expresses more than once in the book of Ecclesiastes. "Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city." "Wisdom is better than strength." The superiority of mental to muscular force is everywhere manifest. (1.) It is seen in man's control in the world about him. By intelligence he brings the wildest and strongest beasts of the field into subjection to himself. It is seen in human governments; it is the few wise men of an age that control the millions; the few civilized souls that lead a nation of barbarians captive at their will. A few thinking men in England control 150,000,000 of the human race in India. "Wisdom is better than strength." (2.) The superiority of mental over muscular force has often been seen in *human warfare*. "The proverb

has had at times a literal fulfilment. Look at ancient Babylon. With its insurmountable walls, and bulwarks, it seemed secure, and its monarch could smile in proud defiance at the power of the mightiest assailants. But Cyrus had something besides military force. He had *wisdom*: and the turning of the course of the Euphrates, and entering by its channel, accomplished what force could not in any way effect; and in an unexpected moment, a moment of careless and fearless mirth and revelry, and glorying in the impregnable security of its lofty and massive munitments, was "the strength of the confidence" of Babylon "cast down." (3.) The superiority of mental over muscular force is seen every day in *commerce*. Who are the men who do the most business in the world's great mart? Not the men whose muscular power is always on the stretch, all hurry, bustle, and almost out of breath; but those who with superior mind, forecast, arrange, direct. It is not the shop where the greatest bustle is that the most business is done. "Strength, wanting judgment and policy to rule, overturneth itself." *Horace.* (4.) The superiority of mental over muscular force is seen in *religion*. Mere force, alas, has often been employed by governments to enforce religion, but it has signally failed, coercion cannot travel to a man's soul. It is the power of mind alone in the form of argument, suasion, example, that can spread truth. We shall now look on the text as suggesting the march of the good. "A wise man" in Solomon's meaning is a good man, and the words therefore

may express that a good man overcomes difficulties.

I. A good man in his progress **SURMOUNTS OBSTRUCTIONS**. The march of a good man may be compared to that of an aggressive soldier; one who has to go forth to subdue fresh enemies and win new conquests, one who like him in the Apocalyptic vision has to go forth "conquering and to conquer." Everywhere, however, he meets with difficulties—"the city of the mighty." Political institutions, social customs, secular interests, religious prejudices, &c. These rear their formidable heads before him like the "city of the mighty." In the strength of God he goes on. He "scaleth the city." "He casteth down imaginations and everything that exalteth itself." By his faith he overcomes difficulties; he says to this mountain "Depart," &c. Thus Paul marched on.

II. A good man in his progress **CONFOUNDS OBSTRUCTORS**. "He casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof." He becomes more than a conqueror. The Christian warrior destroys the confidence of his opponents; he strikes into their souls the arrow of his convictions, and in their terror they exclaim, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The confidence of the wicked is based on falsehood, and as truth advances it gives way; is based on ignorance, and as intelligence advances it must yield; is based on selfishness and injustice, and as benevolence and rectitude advance it must totter to the fall.

**CONCLUSION.**—Let not force, though organized by governments and backed by batta-

lions, depress the good man with alarm.

'What is strength without a double share  
Of wisdom? Vast, unwieldy, burthen-  
some,  
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
By weakest subtleties: strength's not  
made to rule,  
But to subserve where wisdom bears com-  
mand.' MILTON.

"My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

#### THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE.

"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from trouble." —Prov. xxi. 23.

SOCRATES, the ecclesiastical historiographer, reports a story of one Pambo, a plain ignorant man, who came to a learned man and desired him to teach him some one Psalm or other. He began to read unto him Psalm xxxix., *Dixi custodiam*, &c. ("I said, I will look to my ways that I offend not with my tongue.") Having passed this first verse Pambo shut the book and took his leave, saying that he would go learn that point first. When he had absented himself for the space of some months he was demanded by his reader when he would go forward. He answered that he had not yet learned his old lesson: and he gave the very same answer to one that asked the like question forty-nine years after. Such a hard thing it is to rule this unruly member of the tongue that it must be kept in with a bit and a bridle, bolts and bars. Our subject is the government of the tongue.

I. Such a government is NECESSARY. "Whoso keepeth his mouth and tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." What troubles come through an ungoverned tongue? First: Troubles on *self*. (1.) The troubles of *moral remorse* have often been brought into the soul through unguarded language. When a word unkind, untruthful, or unjust, has slipped from the lips, thought begins its work, and the conscience gets painfully excited, and the soul thunders with self-denunciation. Such a word would be recalled, but it cannot be. It is gone forth, and its march will be as *interminable* as the march of the stars. (2.) The troubles of *social distress* have often come upon a man through unguarded language. Friends have been sacrificed, enemies created, litigations commenced, and fines and penalties enacted. Truly, an ungoverned tongue, is like an unbridled steed, or an unruddered vessel. It will bear to ruin. Secondly: Troubles on *others*. An ungoverned tongue is like a river, whose embankments have given way, spreading disasters through a whole neighbourhood. Half the law-suits and wars in the world have been brought about through unguarded speech. In America the Indians strike a spark from flint and steel, and thus set fire to the dry grass, and the flames spread and spread until they sweep like a roaring torrent over a territory as large as England, and men and cattle have to flee for their lives. An unguarded word can produce a social conflagration greater far. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth," and the tongue is a fire.

II. Such a government is PRACTICABLE. This is implied in the expression, "Whoso keepeth his mouth." St. James makes it incumbent by showing that it is essential to religion. "If any among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, and deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." The tongue is not an *involuntary* organ, an organ that works irrespective of the will, like the heart and lungs; it is always the servant of the mind; it never moves without volition. Heaven has endowed us with a natural sovereignty equal not only to the government of the tongue, but

to all the lusts and passions that set it in motion. A finer manifestation of moral majesty you can scarcely have than in *reticence* under terribly exciting circumstances, such a reticence as Christ displayed when He stood before His insulting judges.

CONCLUSION.—Do not let this steed ride without a bridle, do not let this vessel move without a rudder. "Give not thy tongue," says old Quarles, "too great a liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken is like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desireth to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue."

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## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

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### SIMILES FROM A PREACHER'S NOTE-BOOK.

*Dawn of Day.*—The world at present is in its night-state, a state preparing it for that bright and everlasting day which is even now coming with silent dawning on it. At times it may be more starlight, and at other times more cloudy; but it is night still, and will continue to be so till the eternal morning dawn "and the shadows flee away."

*Sins.*—You may cut off branch after branch of your sins, but you will not succeed in putting an end to them so long as the deep-seated roots of evil remain in the heart. The Lord Christ alone by His lightning spirit, can destroy the life of wrong,

sending destruction to all the thousand ramifications of evil. Unless He do so it will be useless for you to hew away, for every spring-time that comes will produce fresh leaves and flowers of evil, and before long new and strong young branches.

*Solitude.*—The Spirit of the Lord will talk with anyone who will go silently and alone up the mountain side, and there watch the sun rise or the stars shine forth, and bending reverently his head, let the curtain clouds shut him into the sanctuary of the sacred solitude. But, like Sinai and Carmel, and Tabor, the mountain slopes are holy ground; and woe be to him who holds intercourse with Satan or with evil there.

*The Same Sun.*—Christianity shows different results in different persons. As the sun shining through painted windows, or clear white glass, casts pictures of saints on to the marble pavement, or only uncoloured light; so it, according to the mind of him who receives it, produces different external effects: yet in each case the effect is caused by the same sun.

*Meaning of Life.*—If you never try to learn the meaning of life it will probably be to you full of perplexity and dreariness, having neither order nor harmony in it; as to one who flings his fingers over some musical instrument which he cannot play, all is discord and unpleasantness: but when the master approaches and touches the keys, he brings music from it, and to his hand it gives forth melody and beauty.

*Evil, Gross or Polished.*—There are many who only condemn sin when it is gross and distasteful, but pass it by without a frown when it is bright and polished: yet what does it matter whether a man drinks poison from a silver chalice or an earthen cup? In either case the end will be death.

*Faith.*—By faith in the Lord Christ and His supporting hand, we can rise above the waters of disappointment and walk upon them; even as the boastful Peter walked upon the waves when his Master was near to sustain him.

*Light of Folly.*—Sometimes the fool gives light; but it is a warning light, like the phosphorescent glow from a corpse, which tells of its decay.

*Trouble.*—The waters of trouble are like those of the Red

Sea: they stand on both sides of the people of God—they do not touch them, although they are in their midst—that they may pass through them dry-shod.

*Fascination of Sin.*—As the serpent is said to fix its prey with its eye before it destroys it, so the brightness of sin fascinates the sinful.

*Life from God.*—A Christian is not like a house in building, needing to be reared by some other man. He is rather like a tree that requires only life from God, and is then sustained by all the means God has provided for its support.

*Care in Warning Others.*—We need to be careful even in our efforts to do good, or we shall find that we are destroying instead of benefitting those whom we wish to serve. We may extinguish the little flame of piety by constantly enforcing religion, as a fire may be extinguished by feeding it with too much fuel.

*Human Systems.*—How often have we seen persons gazing intently at a few coloured balls from fireworks, whilst above them unheeded shone all the stars of heaven! Yet in a similar manner are we constantly looking at human systems, and neglecting God's truth.

*Friends in Sorrow.*—There are some blossoms that give out their perfume only by night; like these flowers are the few ministers of mercy who are seldom to be found in the palaces of feasting and pleasure, but constantly in the dwellings of the sorrowful.

*Fitted for Work.*—All the servants of God need to be educated for their work ; a sword may be made of good metal, but unless its edge is ground, it cannot be used with effect.

*A Voyage Alone.*—Each one must go into the sea of death by himself, as Columbus and his crew went alone to discover the New World.

*Variety.*—The topics of the

Christian teacher are few, and yet with these few topics it is possible for him to have great diversity in his instructions : like an artist with a few colours, he is to produce an endless variety of shades, as God has done among the flowers, and in the landscapes of the world.

HUBERT BOWER.  
*Brighton.*



# A HOMILY

ON

## *Soul Education.*

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### EMBLEMS OF SOUL WORK.

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“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—2 Peter iii. 18.

**N**ATIONAL Education is again the question of the hour. Our government, composed of men of various measures of mental power, degrees of culture, and types of thought, has brought in a Bill for educating the children of the poor. This measure has been discussed in Parliament, is now being canvassed by every sect in England, and has loaded the table of the House of Commons with petitions both for and against its provisions. To criticise it here we cannot ; neither our space nor purpose will admit of this. I may, however, in passing on to the leading subject which I have set before me, offer two or three remarks on this government measure. I regard it as an invasion of one of the fundamental rights of humanity. Of all the prerogatives of our nature none is more sacred, none should be held more inviolate, than the right of every parent to educate his own child. No man or body of men, no religious sect, or politi-

cal party, has any moral authority whatever to snatch from the parent this educating prerogative. If the parent voluntarily delegates this power to a schoolmaster, a church, or a government, well and good. He has exercised his right and perhaps served his children in the matter. But to drag children to school contrary to the wishes of their parents is mental kidnapping and nothing less. I remark again that the supposed national necessity for this measure reveals a national evil that reflects discredit upon the rulers of the land. What is that evil? Pauperism. Why do not the poor in England educate their own children? It must be either for the want of a disposition or the want of ability. Is it the former? No! With a few exceptions, found only amongst those who have been dehumanized by hardening want and crime, parents everywhere throughout the land earnestly desire the education of their children; the parental instinct struggles and prays for it. The lack of ability is the cause. The pauperism which has grown to such a hideous enormity in this country as makes the hearts of true philanthropists bleed, and enlightened patriots stand aghast, paralyses the educating ability of parents in the lower ranks of society. The first great duty of the government should be to remove this obstruction. To force a schoolmaster on families whose parents and children are starving for want of food is tantalizing mockery. But how can our legislators remove this huge hindrance to a national education? There are many ways. I point to one only. The waste lands of England, amounting, we are told, to 2,000,000 acres, would afford labour and ample support for all the poor for ages to come. A tax of only two shillings per acre would speedily put an end to all our pauperism. Such a tax would bring land into the market for cultivation on reasonable terms, and produce a revenue that could be employed to open up new fields of industry and supply means for education that would be equal to all the emergencies of the people. The Author of our being has deposited in the soil the germ of

all the necessaries and comforts of human life : all food and clothing are there. The men who hold these acres uncultivated, lock up the chests which contain all the provisions for human wants. If they choose to hold the keys of nature's bountihood in their hands, let them be taxed for the privilege. Cultivate the waste lands of England, and the people will soon build schools for themselves and save Government the trouble. In passing on I offer another remark on this measure, and that is, that a sad fallacy runs through the minds of all its advocates. The fallacy is this,—that education, which in its popular sense means instruction in the elements of knowledge and the art of reading and writing, is an antidote to immorality and crime. This is a huge error. The heart, not the brain, is the spring of human conduct. Men don't act from their ideas, but from their feelings. A dishonest nature uninstructed will play the felon on a small scale, but enlighten it with the elements of knowledge and it shall construct swindling schemes that shall bring ruin to a whole community, and create a panic in the commerce of a country whose disastrous influences shall be felt for many a year.

Now the main subject on which I wish to fasten your attention for a few minutes is *soul education*. What is it ? I have taken the text as suggesting the best answer I can find. It indicates that it is *growth*, and growth in "the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ."

I. Soul education is GROWTH. The true progress of the soul is frequently represented in Holy Writ as growth. Thus it is said that the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Again, "he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon ;" again, "ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Paul expresses the same idea in his letters to the Ephesians ; he says, "speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him in all things ;" and Peter also, not only in

the text, but elsewhere as well, expresses the same doctrine. He says, "desiring the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." The Bible, therefore, clearly shows that the true education of man is *growth*. This implies—

First: *That the soul is a vital existent.* A dead thing cannot grow. Where life is not, there is no growth ; where life once was, but has departed, growth has ceased. The false views of education which are painfully present throughout the civilised world, are based upon an ignorance of what soul is. Sometimes education is spoken of as if the mind was a dead vessel, into which a certain amount of information is to be poured until it is filled. The instructor endeavours to cram the memory of his pupil with names and dates, facts and rules. But the putting into the mind all the facts of science and history is not education, is not growth; nay, this may check growth, and crush the inner germs of life. Too much soil thrown upon the seed will exclude the sun's rays, and make it rot. There are many well-informed men who have never been educated, whose souls have never grown. Sometimes education is spoken of as if the mind was some stone, on which the instructor was to act as a lapidary, to chisel it into some graceful form, and polish it into beauty. Hence we are constantly hearing of the accomplishments, such as music, painting, drawing, and the fashionable in style of talk and gait. Some of the most uneducated people in the world possess the most of these meretricious accomplishments. Under all such external brilliancy there are paralyzed energies and stunted souls. Sometimes education is spoken of as if the mind was arable land which has to be ploughed and harrowed in order to receive and germinate seed. Philosophically, nothing can grow in the soul ; it is not the facts nor principles that you impart to the mind, that will grow. They remain dead things in the memory—worse than useless, unless the soul takes them up—drinks them in as healthy trees drink in the sunbeam and the shower. It is not the water or the light

that grows in the plant, but the plant that grows in them. The mind, then, is not a vessel, or a stone, or a field ; it is a vital existent, to whose nature you can add nothing, and from which nothing can be taken.

That soul education is a growth, implies—

Secondly : That the soul is a vital existent possessing *developable powers*. There are living things that have not the power of growth. Some, perhaps, have been created with their nature fully developed. There is no power in them of coming to any higher point. And others have passed through all the stages of development, and are exhausted—the culminating point has been reached, and decay sets in. The autumn of its life has come and gone, and the cold hand of winter is on its heart. It is not so with the soul. Its potentialities are unbounded. Omnipotence only knows what greatness of intellect, grandeur of character, splendour of achievements, come within the power of every mind, however humble. Vast fields of thought, broad landscapes of beauty, mighty forests of brave deeds, slumber within the breast of every child, as in one acorn mighty forests sleep. The man who learns to draw from his own soul, opens up fathomless deeps within. The law of mind is, that it “scattereth and yet increaseth.” Nothing is so fecund as thought : one often begets myriads. Every true idea is a key to unlock new treasures. It is to the soul, as the opening of a gate into a more magnificent garden, or the unsealing of a deeper and a clearer well, or the discovery of a new and richer mine of wealth.

That soul education is a growth, implies—

Thirdly : That the soul is a vital existent, possessing *developable powers*, *requiring developing conditions*. The seed may contain a germinant power capable of covering continents with fields of golden grain ; yet if it remains shut up in the granary, or buried under a rock, it will never be anything more than dry dust. It is so with the soul. However great its latent power, though it contains the germs of

seraphic genius, unless it is placed in certain conditions, it will remain dormant. The mind, say some philosophers, is like a blank sheet of paper, on which you may inscribe anything. Not so ; you can inscribe nothing that is not there written in rudiment ; you can plant nothing that is not there in sleeping germ. All it requires is the quickening and unfolding conditions. This is what the true school has to do. The agriculturist knows those elements which are adapted to develop his grain, and he plants his grain amongst them. The school should act thus : understand the elements adapted to educate,—draw forth into vigorous growth the soul, and bring them to bear upon its sensibilities and powers.

Soul education, then, is growth. Not the growth of anything imparted to it, but the growth of itself ; not the growth of any of its particular faculties, but the growth of its entire self, simultaneously and symmetrically. Etymologically the word education means drawing out, and what is growth but the drawing out of our latent energies into higher forms of life. Instruction is not education. Instruction means something put into the mind, but unless what is put in helps to draw out the soul, it is rather a bane than a boon. It buries rather than fructifies.

II. Soul education is growth in CHRIST. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." These two words represent the two great elements by which alone the human soul can be educated. "Love and truth." And these as found in connection with Jesus Christ, by whom "grace and truth" came into the world. There must be growth in the love of Christ—the love which He had for us, self-sacrificing, religious, unconquerable ; and there must be growth in the knowledge of Christ. He is the truth, the truth in relation to God, the universe, and humanity. I may make two remarks here :—

First : Christ is the *ideal* after which the soul is to grow.

Paul, speaking of the soul's growth, says, "Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things." He is our ideal ; we are "to grow up into Him." All growth proceeds on some plan—"every seed has its own body." In every grain there is, as it were, an archetype or map of all the stages of its future growth ; its dimensions, form, and foliage, are all determined. The same is true in relation to animal growth. The psalmist seems to have had this idea in relation to himself ; and hence he states, "In thy book all my members were written, when as yet there was none of them—as if he had said, "My physical being has been proceeding on a plan, even from its first stage of growth." This is a general truth. All the million forms of life and beauty that I see around me, are but the filling up of certain plans that existed before the universe was ; they are but the tangible embodiment of ideas which the Infinite admired and loved, and "with His vital smile unfolded into being." All this is true in relation to soul-growth. Minds in all worlds go on to develop and strengthen their powers after some ideal. There are two great ideals prevalent on this earth, the worldling and the Christian. The former often associated with greed, sensuality, impurity, and superstition ; the latter standing always as clear, universal, and beneficent as the sun ; it is the light of men.

Secondly : Christ's *character* is the element in which alone the soul can grow. His "grace" and his "knowledge." furnish the only atmosphere in which the human soul can healthfully live, thrive, and grow. The soul that does not live in His "grace" has an atmosphere too cloudy to enable it to see things as they really are—too stagnant to inspire its energies with a vital breeze. He that loveth not, knoweth not God ; and he who knows not God, knows not His universe. Selfishness is a lens that reduces to the smallest speck the truly great, and magnifies to immense dimension the puerilities of existence. It throws all in the moral domain into false shapes and fictitious proportions,

and tinges all with hues untrue to fact. The man who looks at truth through a selfish heart, is like the man in some dreary wilderness, with the mists of the mountains hanging over him, whilst looking out upon nature. His horizon is contracted and clouded ; the azure roof above, and the meads and the mountains around, are shut out from him by the shadows of the wilderness, and the haze of the atmosphere. And even the few things which fall under his eye are but dimly perceived. They appear not in the just proportions of nature, nor in the blush of beauteous life. On the contrary, the man who looks at truth through the other moral medium—the “ grace and knowledge of Christ ”—is like the man who on some cloudless day looks forth on nature from some Alpine height. The horizon is vast, and all things stand out in just proportions, and form one magnificent landscape to entrance the soul.

CONCLUSION.—It will be seen from this that all true education must be *essentially religious*. You may instruct man in the art of reading and writing, and in the elements of general knowledge, but this is not education. This may develop certain faculties, such as the imaginative, linguistic, and mathematic, but these faculties will be like the green branches which are sometimes seen springing out of a tree that has been cut down. The tree is dead, and the branches are only feeding on its rottenness. Nor can such instruction make the dishonest honest, the corrupt virtuous ; it may help men to do with dexterity certain mundane business, and thus serve their temporal interest during their short stay on this earth, but it does not develop their nature, nor promote them to the destiny of true manhood. You may as well endeavour to bring out the life and beauty of the landscape without the sun, as to bring out the deepest and divinest powers of man without the idea of God, and His blessed Christ. Alas, that there should be men in England so unphilosophic and so profane as to endeavour to shut out

the Bible from public schools. As for sectarian dogmas, I care not for them—the sooner they are extinct the better. But the *biography of Christ*, the heart of the Bible, I hold that to be everything to human souls. Shall the name of Him who has created the difference between civilization and barbarism, between Christendom and Pagan lands—who has given to humanity whatever freedom and purity, noble aspirations, holy loves, it has, be excluded from the public schools of England? Nay, ought there to be a single instructor employed for our young whose antecedents fail to furnish the most conclusive evidence of his love and devotion to Him, who is “the Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel.”

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## *Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.*

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*Subject:—THE GOD OF THE WORLD AS SEEN BY THE GOOD—  
A SHEPHERD AND A HOST.*

“The Lord is my shepherd :  
I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures :  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul : He leadeth me  
In the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil :  
For Thou art with me ;  
Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me  
In the presence of mine enemies :  
Thou anointest my head with oil ;  
My cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life :  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”—*I'sa. xxiii.*

**HISTORY.**—That David is the author of this Psalm is a fact generally

heart. The occasion of its composition is not known. Was it written before he entered on public life, when he kept his father's flocks in the quiet pastures around Bethlehem? In some shady wood, amid green pastures, and beside quiet waters, with the flocks around him and under his care, did the idea of God as the Great Shepherd of His people inspire him with the spirit of poetry and devotion? It is so thought by some, but the reference in the last verse to the "house of the Lord" is fatal to this idea, for the temple was not built when he had the charge of his father's flocks. It was undoubtedly written at a time when God had signally interposed on his behalf after some special season of great trial and anxiety, for he speaks of Jehovah as "restoring his soul," as bringing him back to the "paths of righteousness." What was this *special season*? Some say that no period of his life agrees better with the allusions in the Psalm than the death of Nabal. This event he considered a signal mercy; hence he exclaims, "Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel," he said to Abigail, "who sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hath kept me this day from coming to shed blood." (1 Sam. xxv. 32.) And on hearing of Nabal's death he exclaimed again, "Blessed be Jehovah, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept His servant from evil." This view, it is admitted, is sufficient to account for the imagery, for the flocks of Carmel were feeding around him, he was daily mingling with the shepherds, and the gloomy horror of the neighbouring defiles sufficiently accounts for the strong expression, "the valley of the shadow of death." Others say that it was composed on the same occasion as that of the 42nd; viz., when David had taken refuge from Absalom amongst the vast uplands which encircled the city of Mahanaim. Stopford Brooke, who takes this view, says that these images were suggested to David in the country over the Jordan. "He had crossed," he says, "the river, and ascended the slopes till he came to Mahanaim. All round about the city lay the great pastoral land of Palestine. Wide, rolling down, cut by deep gorges, where Jabkok and his brethren had cleft their paths to the Jordan; great patches of forest, where the vast herds of cattle wandered at will, made it a country of enormous parks. With Moab, Bashan, and Reuben it was the great sheep-farm of the East; and it requires no imagination to picture David looking forth in melancholy thought from the terrace wall of Mahanaim upon the uplands, and seeing, as the traveller may see now, the shepherd bringing the flocks at noon tide beneath the shadow of the trees to the greenest and tenderest pasture, and as evening fell leading them down to the springs of quiet waters to slake their thirst. Picture to yourselves the mournful king watching that landscape in his solitude, and then, as darkness suddenly fell, and the outward images became ideas in the brain, you will feel how natural it was that the Psalm should well upwards from the heart. We can almost hear the quick spontaneous words which rushed to his lips as he retired to rest, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.'"

which rushed to his lips as he retired to rest, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.'

**ANNOTATIONS.**—*Ver. 1.*—“*The Lord is my shepherd.*” “*Jehovah is my shepherd.*” The comparison of God's care to that of a shepherd was first used by Jacob, Gen. xlix. 24—xv. 15; then by Moses, Deut. xxxii. 6, 12. From these passages the prophets borrowed the same figure—Is. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 12, 23; Micha, vii. 14. In the New Testament Christ is compared to a shepherd—John x. 11; 1 Peter ii. 25; v. 4; Heb. xiii. 20. Travellers in the East, such as Dr. W. M. Thomson, author of the “*Land and the Book;*” Rev. J. L. Porter, author of the “*Giant Cities of Bashan,*” and others record the peculiarly close and tender relationship of the Oriental shepherd to his flock. “*I shall not want.*” This is the practical inference. With a shepherd ever present, ever tender, ever good and mighty, want is impossible. “*I shall not want*”—what? Money, fame, power, unbroken health, these may all go and yet there may be no want of aught to make the soul free, great, triumphant, and joyous. He is the affluent man whose soul is fully satisfied. Temporal destitution is not only compatible with spiritual opulence, but often a condition to it—“*though poor, possessing all things.*” “*I shall not want.*” Want nothing that I desire, for I shall desire nothing but that which makes me holier, which brings me nearer to God.

*Ver. 2.*—“*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.*” “*Pastures*”—plentifulness of provision. An abundance of delicious and nutritious herbage farther than the eye can reach. “*Green pastures*”—the necessaries associated with the beautiful. What is more beautiful to the eye than verdant hues? In the margin it is “*pastures of tender grass.*” But Alexander translates the expression “*pastures of verdure.*” “*Lie down.*” I rest amidst the beautiful and the plentiful. I lie down, I am satisfied, I am at ease; I have no fear, anxiety, or want; I ruminare amidst an affluence of bounty and beauty. “*He leadeth me beside the still waters.*” By “*still waters*” here, we are not to understand quiet waters, but quiet souls. “*The repose,*” says Alexander, “*is not of the waters themselves, but of the flocks reclining near them.*” We don't know that “*still waters*” are more pleasant to the eye or the taste than the agitated. We like the waters that roll by us with sufficient agitation to make music on the ear; but stillness of soul—moral quietude—is a desirable and a beautiful state. David means to say, “*He leadeth me with a quiet soul beside the waters;*” or, as the “*Four Friends*” translate the expression, “*He leadeth me beside the waters of comfort.*” “*Beside,*” not merely *to* them, but along their verdant banks. “*He leadeth*”—He draws, not drives. “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*” “*He*”—what a leader! It is a long and trackless way, reaching not only through time, but through eternal ages; but He knows every step.

*Ver. 3.*—“*He restoreth my soul.*” He refresheth my soul. The meaning of the word is to vivify, or to quicken. All finite souls are liable to

exhaustion. There is but One in the universe "who fainteth not, neither is weary." And it is He who gives refreshment to wearied souls. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." "*He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness.*" This may mean either paths opposed to the devious or the dangerous, or paths opposed to the unholy and the wrong. Righteousness has many paths, but all running in one direction: paths suited to minds of every intellectual and moral type, and of every social condition in life. There is a righteous path for the poor and the rich, for the young and the old, for the ruler and the ruled, &c. "*For His name's sake.*" God's motives of action are underived, His springs of action are in Himself. Whatever He does He does for His own sake, and the dearest thing to His heart is the happiness of His creation.

Ver. 4.—"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." It is generally supposed that this clause refers to death, but such a view is an utter misapprehension of the figure. What is the picture? "To realize it," says an able expositor, "we must conceive a long narrow valley or glen, shut up on either side by impassable mountains, and along the base of which lies the path we have to travel. At the further end sits the giant form of death—grim, dark, repulsive—filling up the whole space; shutting out from the view the bright scenes that lie beyond, and projecting his gloomy shadow all down the valley, even to its very gorge. It is a picture of life, which is a journey onward into death. Within the skirts of that far-reaching shadow the infant enters with the first breath it draws; and on, on, on, ever deeper into the shadow must we travel, until the grim tyrant at length holds us in his arms and claims us as his prey. Our whole life is a walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

'The arrow that shall lay me low  
Was shot from Death's unerring bow  
The moment of my birth.  
And every footstep I proceed  
It tracks me with increasing speed.  
I turn—it meets me!—Death  
Hath given such impulse to that dart,  
It points for ever to my heart.'

It is worthy of note that all the verbs in the Psalm are in the future, except the one translated "anointest." And David is speaking of himself here as walking in death's shadow; and so are all. The dark shadow of death rests on our path wherever we go; we are walking through it. A shadow ever implies light; there is a sun behind the craggy hills. "*I will fear no evil.*" However dark and chilly the shade that is thrown in my path as I walk through the deep and weird ravines of life I will not, or rather I do not, fear. What harm can a shadow do? The shadow of the prowling beasts can't harm me, the shadow of a mountain can't crush me. "*Thou art with me.*" This is the philosophy of his courage. The Almighty and all-loving ever near.

The child will walk with fearless steps the darkest rooms in the old castle when he feels his hand locked in the hand of his father. “*Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.*” “The Shepherd,” says Dr. W. M. Thomson, in his “Land and the Book,” “invariably carries a staff or rod with him when he goes forth to feed his flock. It is often bent or hooked at one end, which gave rise to the shepherd’s crook in the hand of the Christian bishop. With this staff he rules and guides the flock to their green pastures, and defends them from their enemies. With this also he corrects them when disobedient, and brings them back when wandering. This staff is associated as inseparably with the shepherd as the goad is with the ploughman.” The “rod” and the “staff” are mentioned perhaps not as weapons of defence, but as badges of the Shepherd and tokens of His presence.

Ver. 5.—“*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.*” Here Jehovah appears to his imagination in a new character. The SHEPHERD gives way to the Host. A table is set before him and a banquet is spread. It is richly furnished with every variety of food, and he is allowed to feast in the presence of his enemies. His foes look on full of rage and envy, but they fret not his spirit, nor prevent him from enjoying the banquet. There is something triumphant in feasting before foes. “*Thou anointest my head with oil.*” This is an allusion to the richness and abundance of the unction which was used on ancient festive occasions. “*My cup runneth over.*” That is, my beverage runneth over. More than sufficient to eat and drink he had, his cup ran over.

Ver. 6.—“*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.*” Here we have the source of all the blessings specified in the preceding verses—“Goodness and mercy.” And here is the expression of confidence that these blessings will continue to flow on him during his life. “*Surely goodness,*” or as some render it *only* goodness, nothing but goodness, &c. “*And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*” To dwell in His house means not frequenting His sanctuary, but being a permanent member of His family, enjoying His presence, and subsisting on His bounty.

**ARGUMENT.**—The grand sentiment of this exquisite ode is exultant confidence in God, in passing through life. (1.) Confidence in God as his Shepherd; (2.) confidence in God as his Host, preparing a table for him.

**HOMILETICS.**—It is easy, and therefore common, to write panegyrics on this matchless poem. Some have called it the nightingale of Psalms, pouring forth a fresh melody which, when once heard, will never be forgotten. Some have called it the pearl, because in purity, beauty, and worth it is unsurpassed. Some have called it the Pleiades among the other constellations of the book. We may multiply grand names, but this

will not bring out its wealth of sentiment. No portion, perhaps, of God's Word is better known than this. Thousands of children in every generation commit it to their memory at the very dawn of their reason, and it goes down with them as a good angel to the close of life, and often charms them into rapture as they cross the dividing stream. It has been the text of ten thousand sermons, and for ages it has been pealing its grand sentiments in all the churches of Christendom. It has got into nearly all the languages of the earth, and speaks to men of every tongue. It has been balm to many a bleeding heart, and courage to many a desponding soul. It has gone to the poor man in his hovel, and its words have made him rich. It has entered the cell of the prisoner, and caused the captive to exult in a liberty which no despot could injure, no time destroy. It has gone down with mourners to the grave of their loved ones, wiped away their tears, scattered the clouds of sorrow, and brought the sunshine of immortality into the breast. Naturally timid souls it has clothed with the unconquerable prowess of confessors. It has attended the martyr to the stake, and charmed him into rapturous music amidst the fury of the flames. In one word, under its influence the mean has become noble, the cowardly heroic, the sad joyous, the desponding luminous with hope.

Homiletically we see in this psalm what the *God of the world is in the eyes of the good*. God appears a very different Being to different minds. To some He is absolute Force; to others, an iron-hearted Spectator; to others, an arbitrary Despot; to others, an indignant Judge. But here we have Him as He appears to the good. We have Him here in two aspects—a *Shepherd* and a *Host*.

I. He appears as a **SHEPHERD** to the good. “The Lord is my shepherd.” Those who follow this Shepherd are truly blest—blest in many ways that are here suggested.

First: They are blest with *deliverance from the fear of want*. “I shall not want,” or as some render it, “I do not want.” The fear of “want” is one of the most disturbing fiends of the human soul. Men are everywhere fearing that they shall lack a something which they regard as vital to their interests. Godliness expels this fear from the human heart by inspiring un-

bounded confidence in the bountihood of Heaven. What can he want who can say, "The Lord is my portion?"

Secondly: They are blest with *the enjoyment of satisfying good*. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." The "green pastures" into which they are led, so beautiful and abundant, possess such a *soul-satisfying* quality that, having fed upon the abundance, they *lie down* in their midst to ruminate upon the boundless beneficence of God. "He maketh me to lie down." He has allayed my appetite, dispelled my anxieties, satisfied my nature, and caused me to "lie down" amidst the affluence of His love.

Thirdly: They are blest in being *calmly led along the river of life*. "He leadeth me beside the still waters." The word "still," as I have already observed, refers not to the "waters," but to the soul. On the whole "still waters" to me are not as interesting as water in agitation. I like the purling brook, the rattling stream, the rushing, roaring river, better than the sleepy current. The spiritual blessings of the Gospel are often compared to "waters;" they are the rivers of soul-life. Jehovah leads His people not only to that river, but along its flowery banks, where they inhale the sweet aroma that floats in the air, and slake their thirst with the refreshing drops.

Fourthly: They are blest with *reinvigoration of soul*. "He restoreth my soul." There is a wear and tear of soul as well as of body. The holiest and the strongest angel would soon get exhausted were it left to depend upon itself. God is the strength of all finite intelligences, however pure and strong. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail, but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

Fifthly: They are blest with being *divinely conducted into the paths of rectitude*. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." There are as many paths of life as there are men. As every star has its own orbit, so every man has his own particular path. No two men can walk in exactly the same way, from the diversity of their faculty and their training. All human paths are of two descriptions, the morally right and the morally wrong. The good man's path, whether it be that of a labourer, mechanic, artist, poet, philosopher, statesman, king, or preacher, is "a path of righteousness."

Sixthly: They are blest with *moral heroism in their march to eternity*. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil." We have already said that David does not speak of the article of death here, but of the path of life, which from the very beginning is a shadowy way. He does not say, "though I *may* walk," "though I *shall* walk," or "though I *should* walk," but "though I *walk*." The figure of death is so colossal that it throws a shadow over the whole path of life. The 800,000,000 men that populate the earth to-day are all moving under its dark shadow. Some tread the valley of life with a *stolid indifference*. Some tread it with *giddy frivolity*; with the dark shadow resting on them they grin like maniacs in a dungeon. Some tread the path of life with a *slavish dread*. "They are all their lifetime, through fear of death, subject to bondage." But the godly man treads it with a heroic step. "I will fear no evil." What is the philosophy of his bravery? Here it is. "For Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." (1.) Thou art with me as the infallible guide in the ever-thickening gloom. What though life be a dark, winding, intricate cavern with mountains above, if He who "weightheth the mountains in a scale, and the hills in a balance," who is the "Light of them who sit in darkness," is with me, what evil have I to fear? (2.) Thou art with me as a safe protector from every possible evil. "Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." That "rod" shall ward off all perils, that "staff" shall sustain under all pressure of the future.

II. He appears as a Host to the good. The pious poet here changes his metaphor. The Shepherd, the sheep, and the pasture are left for the Host, the guest, and the table. "Thou preparest a table before me." As a Host.

First: He provides for His guests a feast in *the midst of their enemies*. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies." (1.) The life of the true is a *feast*. The figure implies three things. (α) A *variety* in the pleasant. Variety is ever the characteristic and the charm of banquets. How boundlessly varied the blessings which heaven has spread out for the enjoyment of the good on this earth. There are the sensuous, the intellectual, the social, and the religious. The figure implies (β)

an abundance in the pleasant. It is almost essential to a feast that the provisions should be ample. Meagreness and scarcity are carefully avoided at banquets. How immeasurable are the blessings provided for the good. The idea of abundance is implied in the text, "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over." The figure implies (*y*) a *social participation* in the pleasant. A feast is not for one but for many, and generally for those of such kindred sentiment as will heighten the enjoyment. Life is social. Observe (2.) The life of the true is a feast *prepared by God*. "Thou preparest." All the rich viands of life are provided and spread out by His munificent hand. Not only does He prepare the feast for His guests, but He prepares His guests for the feast. The banquet, however sumptuous and varied in its provisions, is worthless to all but those who are inclined to participate, and who have the necessary appetite. The great Author of the feast imparts these to His guests.

But the point here is that the feast is spread out in the "*presence of enemies*." A truly good man, who thoroughly enjoys life as a banquet, and moves amongst his compeers with sunny smiles and genial sentiment, is sure to have enemies. Envy and jealousy will create them by hosts. The spiritually morbid and diseased, who cannot enjoy the blessings of providence and religion, will look at him with the eye of envious hate. Devils, too, envy such a man. A good man has ever had enemies, and ever will. David had them. They now surrounded him as he was feasting at the table of God's Providence. There is something gratifying to a man in feasting before enemies. (1.) There is a gratification of the feeling of *independence*. Enjoying a banquet with the eye of an enemy on you, you seem to dare him to do his worst. You have the happy feeling that unrighteous malice cannot injure you. (2.) There is a gratification of the feeling of *benevolence*. Sitting down, enjoying a banquet sufficient for all your enemies, and to which they were invited but would not enter, you feel that as they look on there is a splendid opportunity for them to learn their folly, relent, and attend the entertainment. You hope they will say to themselves, "What fools we are to be outside here indulging in peevish envy, lean-hearted, and half-starved, whilst our neighbours are so jubilant at the board of

plenty." (3.) There is a gratification of our *religious* feeling. You feel, as you enjoy the rich banquet provided for you, that you have an opportunity of showing your enemies the wonderful bountihood of the Master of the feast. You give Him the praise. As a Host,

Secondly: *He follows His guests constantly with His goodness.* "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." The provisions are not for the hour, the day, or the year, or even for the age; the "pastures" are ever green, the "table" is ever loaded. "Goodness and mercy," like an ever-deepening river, follow the godly. If their path should be through obscure glens, intricate windings, and terrible ravines, the river will meander so as to be near them at every point; bearing ever on its calm and majestic bosom fresh cargoes of provisions from the fruitful shores of eternity. "Goodness and mercy shall follow me," &c.

Thirdly: *He entertains His guests for ever in His house.* "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." What a house is His! How vast, how grand, how infinitely numerous and elegant its apartments! The universe is His house. "In my Father's house are many mansions," &c. To dwell in this house for ever, no longer a prodigal in a far country, no longer a wearied pilgrim in the desert, no longer a warrior in the camp, but a son settled down for ever in the mansions of a Father. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

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#### A NEW METRICAL VERSION OF THIS PSALM.

THOU, Lord, art our SHEPHERD ; in this we rejoice ;  
We'll praise Thee, O Saviour, with heart, life, and voice ;  
Thou lead'st us through pastures, so rich and so green,  
Where flows in its fulness, the life-giving stream.

We'll drink of those waters, so still and so free,  
And feast on those pastures, provided by Thee.  
Though death lies before us, and shadows our way,  
We fear not its darkness, for Thou art our stay.

We'll tread the dark valley, with Thee by our side,  
With Thy "rod" and Thy staff, we have a good guide :  
We'll fear not death's river, so drear and so deep,  
Thou tenderly guardest, the least of Thy sheep.

Our Host is Jehovah, so loving and good,  
He covers our "table," with fruit and with food ;  
Our foes shall not hurt us, or cloud our good cheer,  
We'll feast in their "presence," undaunted by fear.

Thy goodness and mercy, have followed us on  
Through the past of our life, that's vanished and gone :  
In Thy house will we dwell, and never depart,  
We'll sing of Thy mercy, exulting in heart.

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THE CHILDREN OF THE SCIENCES.

"It is little more than two hundred years since there was only one man of scientific note in England—William Harvey. When Sydenham was but beginning to practice : when Barrow was studying the Greek fathers at Constantinople ; when Ray was yet unknown ; when Halley was yet unborn ; when Flamsteed was still teething ; when Newton was a farmer-boy, munching apples as he drove to market on Saturdays ; when Hooke was a poor student at Oxford, assisting Boyle in his manipulations ; when Boyle lived in seclusion at the apothecary's—none of the founders of the Royal Society had then emerged from obscurity, and the Royal Society was a small club that met in secret, and called itself the Invisible College. Two centuries have brought a marvellous change. Science came into England with tea, with tea-drinking it spread, and it is now imbibed as universally.—*From "The Gay Science."*"

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## *Germs of Thought.*

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### THE FOREIGN PULPIT.

*Subject: COMPASSION OF JESUS.*

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."—Matt. ix. 36—38.

**G**N the connection we see the Lord engaged in the activities of His calling as the Teacher and Saviour of men. The historians of that time knew nothing of Him and yet His life surpasses all others in significance. The destiny of the race is decided in Him.

History informs us of many great men whose lives and doings

have been of abiding influence. But Jesus is greater than the greatest. There is always something fascinating about an illustrious and influential life ; here we have a life more wide-reaching in its influence than any other.

We are fascinated, moreover, as much by the moral dignity of a life as by its significance and importance. But there are dark sides to the noblest life, blemishes which we wish away. It is otherwise here. The more we contemplate the life of Jesus, the deeper our reverence will be, for there is no blemish here.

But beyond all this, the "kindness and love" of our Saviour is as captivating as His moral excellence. How many scenes in His life might we recall without knowing to which to give pre-eminence ! As for example, where He sits in the midst of His disciples teaching them, or where He takes children in His arms, presses them to His heart and blesses them, or where He sits in the house of Mary and Martha with Mary at His feet listening to His gracious words, or where the woman who was a sinner washes His feet with her tears and receives assurance of forgiveness, or where the widow of Nain receives her son from Him and Jairus his daughter. How many incidents of this sort are recorded in His life, each as it were more attractive than the other. Yet what is it that makes them so heart-winning and attractive ? They are revelations of the Divine mercy and compassion.

If we ask what the words of our text teach us, the answer is clear. They shew us **THE COMPASSION OF JESUS.**

**I. LET US PONDER WHAT IS SAID ABOUT HIS SYMPATHY AND COMPASSION.** The Evangelist gives us in a few strokes a picture of the activity of Jesus during His abode in Galilee. Starting from Capernaum He went through the whole land in all directions every where, bringing help and gracious words. It is a beautiful picture which the Evangelist draws. Having recorded the sermon on the Mount, He records in the two succeeding chapters a series of miracles which Jesus wrought for the good of men. It is intended to depict Jesus to us as a prophet mighty in deed and word. This whole description is brought to a close by the words above. The Evangelist would have us look at length into the heart of Jesus. We are not to look at and think of the outward occurrences merely. The outward history has a hidden background, this background is in the heart of Jesus. We

glance into the inner life of Jesus, into the emotions of His heart; and if we would describe in a word what we see there, it is His compassion for the poor.

It is only here and there that Scripture betrays by a hint the inner emotions of the heart and the hidden events of the inner life. It is of a piece with the sublime simplicity, the sobriety, the restraint that is peculiar to Scripture that, as a rule, it records only outward events; we have to guess at and feel after the deep background. At times it is by a single word only that the narrator removes the curtain which hinders our seeing the hidden events of the inner life and suffers us to glance through the outward history into the secret history of the heart, but on this very account is the glimpse the more striking. Here it is only a word, but a word which contains in it a world of feeling, "and when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them."

Shortly before, the call of Matthew is related. After this come events which followed his call and of which he was a witness. It is significant, then, when he immediately adds, "but when Jesus saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them." We see what it was that struck the newly-won disciple before all else, in the life and work of Jesus whose witness he was henceforth to be. It was His compassionate heart. True, he was witness of deeds of power; but before all things of deeds of love. He was, too, witness of words of reproof; but before all things of words of compassion. The soul of His life was sympathy, sympathy with the poor neglected people. That was the picture that impressed Matthew and that stamped itself indelibly upon his mind. That is, too, the idea we should form of Jesus. True majesty is enthroned on His brow, holiness shines in His countenance, His eyes can kindle with anger and His hand calm the waves of the sea; but through all His majesty and holiness, through His stern severity and His mighty power shines the gentle brightness of His infinite mercy. In all that He says and does He reveals His compassionate love. Even where His words are severe and His eye kindles with anger, it is compassion that brings the stern utterance to His lips for He would thereby stir the conscience, touch the heart, and rescue the soul. He is the revelation of mercy; not of the mercy that we usually see in men. That has its bounds and may be worn out.

His mercy has no bounds, His sympathy is never exhausted : it is like the mercy of God which is upon all and has no end. He is the revelation of the Divine mercy. It is the eternal mercy that has come with Him into time to seek and rescue us. It is the mercy of God that we see in His love and in His life.

If one should be uncertain in his thinking about Christ, not knowing which to heed of the many voices which in our times try to drown one another, and would yet arrive at certainty about Christ—and short of that there is no rest—this must be the starting point, the compassion of the Saviour, the revelation of the Divine mercy in Him, the manifestation of eternal compassion. From this point we may learn what is meant by “God manifest in the flesh.”

Our joy and comfort in life and death is Jesus Christ. But our comfort in Jesus Christ is His compassion. We know that He understands us even where men do not. He knows our need, even our most hidden need, which is unknown to men. He feels with us, and bears with us, even when we find no sympathy elsewhere ; and He helps us when men are altogether unable. And even when our own hearts and consciences are against us and accuse us, He is greater than our hearts, and His compassion has no end. So was He ever. So is He still. He has promised to be with us even to the end. He is with us in His mercy. We do not see Him, and ought not to expect to feel His presence ; He will be believed. And we should believe in Him, and know Him as He revealed Himself when on earth, as He is shown to us in the gospels—as the Saviour full of compassion. Everywhere in scripture, in every circumstance of His life, on every page of the gospels, we see in Him the revelation of Divine compassion.

But there is sorrow in His compassion ; an aspect of sorrow on His face, too. So have we to think of Him. This feeling never left Him ; compassion for the poor neglected people never forsook Him. And what must the sorrow of His soul have been ?

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By R. VAUGHAN PRYCE, MA., LL.B.

## VISIONS OF GOD.

*Subject: JACOB'S VISION.*

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven ; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."—Gen. xxviii. 12.

- I. *Take note of the Surroundings of the Vision.*
- II. *Emphasize the Revelation which the vision contains.*
- III. *Notice its effect upon the mind of him to whom it was given.*

I. **THE SURROUNDINGS.**—First : The ambitious schemings of Jacob and his mother to supplant his brother Esau were founded upon the Divine promise, "The elder shall serve the younger." Was Jacob justified in taking the Divine Providence concerning him into his own hands ? Clearly not. The faithlessness which could not leave the will of God to work itself out in its own righteous way.

Remark 1st, how the outwitter, driven from his home into the companionship of his mother's relatives, is himself outwitted. How often do we see the Divine Providence thus vindicating itself. The wicked man is made to drink of the very cup whose ingredients he had mingled for others.

Secondly : Jacob is an illustration of a man in whose soul faith struggles with ambition.

"In our breasts  
Alas ! two souls dwell—all there is unrest ;  
Each with the other strives for mastery,  
Each from the other struggles to be free."

In one man faith has to struggle with ambition. In another, with lust. In another, with greed. In another with a tendency to intemperance, or falsehood, or worldly indifference, shutting out the spiritual. A soul at rest is likely to be a godless soul. Let us sympathize with all Christian struggles in the great warfare.

II. **THE REVELATION.**—First : "I am with thee," &c. *God as the God of providence.* God's providence is specialized to Jacob. He learnt as he slept under the canopy of heaven, in the chaste brilliancy of the eternal stars, that not only is there a Providence for nations but for individuals also. The vision is

not for Jacob alone. It illustrates to us the fact of God's providence as pursuing us—defending us—protecting us and helping us in a thousand ways, of which we can know nothing. This is the chief fact of the revelation. But there are others, viz.:

Secondly: *The intimate union of the seen and unseen.* "An invisible bridge which connects man with God; human deeds with human destinies: the manifest effects with the great but hidden cause." Man is connected with God through the ministry of angels.—"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation?"

III. THE EFFECTS. First: *A sense of the universal presence of God.* "Surely God is in this place and I knew it not." Secondly: *A sense of awe which possesses the sinning soul at the revelation of God's presence.* How awful is this place." Thirdly: *A sense of penitence at the revelation of God's goodness.* *The revelation of Providence in God should naturally evoke consecration in man.* "I am with thee." "If the Lord will be with me and keep me," &c. The specializing of God to the individual spirit is what we call in modern phrase, conversion. There is a time when the family God, "the God of our fathers," should be apprehended by the individual soul as personal to its own life.

R. THOMAS, M.A.

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Subject: THE VOICE OF DAYS.

"Days should speak."—Job xxxii. 7.

**W**E ought to be very thankful for days. Yes, days; not years merely, or months and weeks only. It is very good of God to break up our lives into so many separate parts. How otherwise should we endure existence? Thus are the burdens of poor humanity lightened. Hereby are our sorrows made tolerable. "Sometimes," quaintly wrote the devout John Newton, "I compare the troubles we have to undergo in the course of the year to a bundle of faggots, far too large for us to lift. But God does not request us to carry the whole at once; He mercifully unties the bundle, and gives us first one stick, which we are able to carry to-day, and then another, which we are to carry to-morrow, and so on." Well may Scripture speak

of "the days of our years," for the division of time into days is most kind.

The text says, that "days should speak." They do. Each has a message. Not one is voiceless. Let us listen to their tidings.

**I. YESTERDAY SPEAKS.** It says, "Learn of me," "To-day is scholar to yesterday," wrote Seneca. "Experience charges dreadful wages, but is an excellent schoolmaster," says Thomas Carlyle. To learn from the experience of the past is one of our prime duties. "The path of the just," not his doctrine merely, but his "path," his experience is as a "shining light."

*What is learned by experience is best understood.* How may one come to understand a trade or profession? By reading books about them? There is a better way. Go into them. The shop will teach more than the "Draper's Assistant," or "Grocer's Guide," or "Druggist's Handbook." The same holds good of things spiritual. No theologian can make the Gospel so plain to us as conviction and penitence do. Piety makes us comprehend Christ.

*What is learned by experience is best remembered.* Read a work containing a description of a certain town. Details of its streets, churches, shops, houses are given. In twelve months' time how much shall you recollect? Only scraps, little items. Your conception of the place will grow vague and dim. But visit the town, walk the thoroughfares, enter the habitations, worship in the sanctuaries and memory will not only photograph, but enamel it. So morally. Truths often heard are as often forgotten perhaps, and facts frequently met with in the word of God are lost sight of quickly. But when they are brought before us and exemplified solemnly in our personal history, we do not so soon let them slip out of our minds.

*What is learned by experience is most practical in its influence.* A little child is on your knee. It is attracted by the bright flame of the candle before it. It stretches forth its tiny hand to touch it. You draw it back. You tell of the danger, warn of the consequences. What follows? Most likely as soon as your eye is arrested, the experiment forbidden is made. Out goes the small finger to touch the pretty light. Ah! will the act be repeated? No. "A burnt child dreads the fire." What all your counsel failed to do, a little painful experience accomplishes.

It is so with "the child of larger growth." The Divine threats and entreaties often fail in restraining from evil when experience succeeds in so doing.

Let us then give heed to the voice of yesterday. Be it ours to profit by the past, saying with the patriarch, "I have learned by experience."

II. **To-DAY SPEAKS.** It says, "Use me. Labour. Turn me and my gifts to good account. Remember that I shall soon be gone. My stay is brief."

Christian! make prompt use of opportunity. "Work while it is day." "Now is the accepted time." "As we have opportunity let us do good." Wisely, indeed, said the ancient philosopher, Epictetus, as in a voyage, when the ship has come to anchor, if you have gone out to find water, you may amuse yourself with picking up shells or bulbs on the shore, but must, nevertheless, keep your attention steadily fixed on the ship lest it should go without you, so we should not be so intent upon worldly trifles as to lose sight of opportunity, and let it depart unimproved. A sculptor once showed a visitor his studio. It was almost full of gods. One was very curious. The face was concealed by being covered with hair, and there were wings to each foot. "What is its name?" said the spectator. "Opportunity," was the reply. "Why is its face hidden?" "Because men seldom know him when he comes to them." "Why has he wings on his feet?" "Because he is soon gone, and once gone, cannot be overtaken." What a lesson for us! Let us toil vigorously for Christ now. In the pulpit, in the Sunday school, in the home, in the haunts of misery, ignorance, and vice—where our "lot of labour falls," let us not procrastinate.

Sinner! To-day has a message to you. "Now is the day of our salvation." Do not trifle with it. "This, thy day," will soon be gone. Use it. Turn to Christ. The longer you delay the greater will be your difficulties. No time is like the present.

III. **To-MORROW SPEAKS.** It says: "Let me alone. Leave me. Trust me with God. Do not anticipate me." Wise and kindly message! Four considerations show this.

*To-day has quite enough cares.* "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." How inconsistent we are! Do we try to eat and drink for to-morrow? Do we dress for to-morrow? No.

Yet we try to bear the troubles of to-morrow as well as those already with us. Nothing can be more foolish.

*Anxiety will not help us to bear to-morrow's cares.* By no means. It does no good. It is perfectly futile, "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" Did foreboding lessen the coming troubles there would be some excuse; nay, justification on its behalf. Such is not the case. On the contrary, it makes us nervous, excited, useless, and therefore unfit to meet, with fortitude, the trials that may befall us.

" What can thy anxious cares avail?  
These never-ceasing moans and sighs?  
What can it help us to bewail  
Each painful moment as it flies?  
Our cross and trials do but press  
The heavier for our bitterness."

*Christ is Lord of to-morrow.* "Unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the age to come;" that is, the future. But it is in the hands of Christ. He never dies. He has conquered death by enduring it, and now He lives the Sovereign of the future, completely controlling it. Alexander the Great had no competent successor; the vast kingdom he had formed was soon broken up at his death and divided among his generals. Oliver Cromwell's son proved himself to be unequal to the work of guiding the stately vessel of the commonwealth, and its helm fell into the hands of a royal libertine. Thus it is with earthly potentates and possessions. But the reign of King Jesus continues. Shall we be fearful of the future when we remember this?

*To-morrow may be quite different from what we expect.* "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow." We are pitiful prophets. Our calculations are often woefully beside the mark. Frequently the very opposite of what we dread or hope comes to pass. The old French proverb says: "Nothing is certain but the unforeseen." "I wish," writes Mr. Arthur Helps, in that suggestive book, "Realmah," "that any one of you, at the outset of any political movement, would write down what you really think will happen. You will be astonished to find how mistaken your prophecy will be. Where men are so deluded, and think that they foresee far more than they do, is in this way—that they keep on modifying, from day to day, their prophecy, in correspondence with the daily changes of events." If the future may

be so different from what we imagine, why trouble so much about it? Wise is he who cries :

“I do not ask to see  
The distant path ; one step’s enough for me.”

Finally : A day, a great day, a day oft spoken of in the Bible draws near. We mean the Judgment Day. It will speak. Oh, what will it say? Will its verdict be in our favour, or will it bear witness against us? May our trust in Christ and our love be made perfect that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment.

*Luton.*

THOMAS R. STEVENSON, B.A.



*Subject : QUIET AND ORDER IN THE TEMPLE.*

“And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither ; so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building.”—1 Kings vi. 7.

**T**HE most noticeable feature in this narrative is that the stones for the temple were all prepared before they were brought to the spot. This might have been done for convenience ; but at the same time it is quite possible that it may have been in compliance with the express command of God. No such command is recorded ; but there is no evidence to render it improbable. Whether commanded or not, the circumstance was *providential*. It was according to God’s purpose ; and may have been intended to be significant.

We would suggest two things :—

I. It might be expressive of the *character of the worship which would be acceptable to God in the Temple.*

First : Worship *prepared for*. The stones were cut and shaped beforehand. So should we go to the House of God in the spirit of devotion. Many go expecting there to get spiritual thoughts, who keep worldly thoughts in their heads until they reach the very doors of the sanctuary. Surely this is not how God would be worshipped. To cultivate a spirit of prayerfulness and reverence before going to the house of God will warrant us to expect the acceptance of our worship, and a blessing on ourselves.

Secondly : Worship *quietly conducted*. God is not delighted with loud and noisy declamation. A reverent tone will be subdued ; but not hypocritically so. A natural tone in prayer and preaching is best. "To that man will I look who is of a humble and contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word."

Thirdly : Worship conducted in an *orderly manner*. Random, irregular, disorderly services cannot be such as God would approve. Late attendance ; listlessness in God's house ; unseemly haste to leave, all these appear to be condemned.

Fourthly : Worship *appropriately* conducted. There should be regard paid to the fitness of things. Prayers and praises specially adapted to summer, are not appropriate for winter. Lively and joyous singing is expressive of gladness, and is therefore suitable for praise ; but on solemn occasions there may be a serious tone given by a tune in a minor key, while the whole aspect of the worship will vary accordingly.

II. The circumstance mentioned in this narrative may be expressive of the *character of the Spiritual Temple, of which the material temple was typical*.

First : There must be a *change* in those who are made stones in the living temple. Rough as from the quarry of sin, they would be unsuitable for the purpose. The analogy fails in one point. The *stones* were the same in nature, although polished. *Sinners* must be changed in heart as well as life.

Secondly : Religion has to do with the *externals* of man's life. An uncouth, rough, rugged Christian is an anomaly. The servant of God should be gentle, meek, patient, lovely, amiable.

Thirdly : The work of preparation must be done *outside* the church. Men are not to be brought into Christ's church as members in order that they may be converted, but because they have been already converted.

Fourthly : All stones in the temple were *serviceable*. Some were more conspicuous than others, and had more to do with the setting forth of the glory of the building. Others were little seen, but indispensable to its completeness. Christians in different spheres of life have greater or less responsibility according to circumstances ; but all are "precious in the sight of the Lord."

*Dawlish.*

F. WAGSTAFF.

# The Pith of Renowned Sermons.

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RICHARD SIBBES, D.D.

*Subject: THE TOUCHSTONE OF REGENERATION.*

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together : and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”—Isa. xi. 6—9.

**T**HIS scripture foretelleth what shall be the fruits of Christ’s kingdom under the Gospel, showing what miraculous change Christ should make upon men, shadowed out in this scripture under the similitude of beasts, as lions, wolves, bears, &c. The sum whereof is that God will take from us that fierceness, malignity, and bitterness of nature in us, and bring us, in place thereof, to a loving, sweet, mild and meek society together. From the teaching thus drawn from the text, we have seen, it follows: first, that in every soul which shall come to heaven, there must be a change: secondly, the change is not of the substantial parts of the body, but of the corrupt qualities of the mind—or soul; thirdly, the change is made upon the Church of God in this world; fourthly, the change cometh from the grace of God, and floweth to us by Jesus Christ our Lord; fifthly, the means by which the change is wrought, namely, by the knowledge of the law. Now we notice mainly in the sermon, sixthly, *The marks of this change.* The marks and infallible signs of regeneration contained in our text are—

**I. HARMLESSNESS.** This though it runs along the body of the text, and is last mentioned, may be named first, for it is implied in all. How can a man say he is renewed unless in some sort he be like unto God in mercifulness ? It is a prime quality in the

wicked to do mischief ; it is a property of God's child to be harmless. There are two signs of this sign.

First : *If we would not do evil, though we might do it unseen of any creature :* as when a little child shall lay his hand on the cockatrice's den, the serpent might sting, and yet unseen of any, pull in the head again.

Secondly : *Though we have provocation, we will abstain from doing evil.* The little child plays on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child lays his hand upon the cockatrice's den. Is not here provocation ? "Bless them that curse and persecute you," &c.

II. SOCIABLENESS. With whom is it that this society holdeth ? Not of lions with lions, or wild beasts with wild beasts ; but there is implied here not only a simple society, as among wild beasts, but a sociableness, as it were, among those of another generation. Naturally all of us have been lions, bears, and wolves, and unsociable haters of goodness in others. Now, then, this sociableness with those former servants of God, who have been called thus, is a very sure mark of this change in us. (1 John iv. 14.) This he rules imports consanguinity. (1.) *No man can love a saint, as a saint, but a saint.* A true trial of sociableness is when men will joy to sort themselves with those with whom formerly they have been most unsociable, and whose company they have most loathed : as the wolf doth lie down with the lamb, which is a slow beast, &c. The voluptuous man having left his lust, loves none so well as Christ's people. (2.) A second sign of this sign is, *to love every brother, yea, though it were to lay down our life for a brother.*

III. CONSTANCY. How is this implied ? By dwelling and lying together. You shall have many companions go with a man for fashion's sake to the church, and yet leave going ere it be long. You shall have some men sick, and then like a serpent frozen in winter, which casts his skin, you shall have them cast their skin a little ; that is, send for a preacher, make confession of their sins, saying, "Oh, if God will spare me, I will become a new man ; I will never do as I have done ; I will never any more haunt such company." But when he is well, within a month after, you will find him not with the lamb, but with the bears and the wolves.

IV. INWARDNESS. Their little ones—dear unto them, and of whom they are so jealous and tender—shall lie down together. Such inwardness is meant in Acts iv. 32: “These dwelt together, and had all things in common.”

V. TRACTABLENESS. A little child shall lead them and rule them. It is a true sign of grace when we become easy to be ruled, and brought in compass. (Job xxxi. 13.)

VI. SIMPLICITY. “The lion shall eat straw like the ox.” Cain was bloody, and fed upon blood, therefore, as it is (John iv. 32) when a man is come thus far, that he hath meat which one seeth not.

Now I come to the uses, which are two :—

First : *For consolation.* Where the mountain is, there is true religion, there is the Church. Look which religion makes a man most mild, and tames his fierce nature, there is the Church. If we be fierce and savage, let us not deceive ourselves ; we are not come to the mountain of which it is said, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.”

Secondly : *For exhortation.* There is yet a little of the lion and the bear remaining in every one of us—our tree yet bears, on one side of it, crabs. Look to thy conversation at home. See what minds we must have if we look for an habitation in God’s holy mountain.

*Bristol.*

URIJAH R. THOMAS.



“It is a kind provision of nature that man, who is always professing to be satisfied with nothing, is after all satisfied with nothings. ‘Pleased with a rattle and tickled with a straw,’ we do not need much to make us happy, and we find that pleasure is produced by means not only the most simple, but also the most unlikely. In the Mahomedan hades there is a narrow wall between paradise and hell which is called ‘Araf.’ It is neither heaven nor hell; it is the place of indifference; and on it are perched the souls of those who have done neither good nor ill in this world. But even here upon earth there is an ‘Araf,’ a place of indifference, only it is by no means a narrow wall. With regard to how much of our pains and our pleasures may we not say, ‘There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.’”—E. S. DALLAS.

# The Preacher's Dissecting Room.

“I SPEAK AS TO WISE MEN.”

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

**H**R. Beecher is fond of the comical ; no matter how solemn or affecting is the nature of the subject discussed by him, he loves to step aside in order to jingle out a small joke. This is the special peculiarity in his style which, in this our concluding article on him, we propose to consider. This is the accusation (for such we deem it to be) which we now make against him ; and the truth and criminality of which we consider it a duty to point out.

Some of our previous extracts from his sermons will have already furnished examples of this fault ; but the following is an additional example which should not be passed by. It occurs in the sermon on the subject of “Divine Influence on the Human Soul,” which we were examining last month ; and is in connexion with the lamentable mistakes so often made respecting that profound and mysterious question, the work of God’s Spirit upon man’s heart. The writer proceeds thus :—

“There are many men who think in meetings that they are called to be teachers, and are divinely inspired, simply because they are conscious of a rush of feeling, of an intense action of their own mind. And it may be that that is the divine indication. For, if they are modest, if they are rich-hearted, if they are experimental, if they are fruitful in instruction to others, and are conscious at the same time that there is an inspiration that bears them on to this work, there is evidence enough that they are called of God. But when a man, rattlebrained, without any experience in life, with nothing in him but conceit, and enough of that to make up for all other lackings, rises, and insists that he is called of the Spirit of God to teach, we all listen and say, ‘What has the Spirit of God called you to teach? Nonsense? Silliness?’ Does God take the trouble to ordain a fool to come forward and tell us things that every infant in the nursery knows? *By their fruits shall ye know them*—and just as much men that are under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost as men that are not. And the reason why a man inspired is a better man than one uninspired, is simply the difference in the fruit; the purity of it; the wholesomeness of it; the abundance of it. An inspired fool is a nuisance; and God never sent such an one.

“I receive every week of my life multitudes of letters which people under deep want are ‘moved by the Spirit of God’ to write. One minister wrote for a thousand dollars with which to take a mortgage off his farm, in order to enable him to preach the Gospel without so much care; and he

assured me that the Spirit of God urged him to do it. I had no doubt of the want, and I had no doubt of the relief which it would give him, and I have no doubt that he had the divine influence in him, if he was a good man; but it was an instance in which the results were evidently from the man himself. The influence might have been from above. But not every mill brings out good fabrics that has a good water-power turning the wheel, or a good engine carrying the machinery: God supplies the motive power for the machinery, but you are the spinners or weavers. The pattern that comes out of the loom—the fabric—is yours. That which stimulates is divine.

“ When a man, therefore, says to me, ‘ My daughter wants a piano, and wants you to pay for it;’ and another man writes, ‘ I want to lift a mortgage, and two hundred dollars would lift it;’ and another writes, ‘ My younger sister wants an education;’ and when they say that God told them to write to me, I beg their pardon! I do not think that God ever tells people anything. I do not think God ever assures anybody of any single result which he will work out in them. He is not going to take away the very motive power of human life. He wakes you up to think, and you are responsible for thinking right. And the judgments which you form are amenable to criticism and review.”

True, most true—though not entirely true—in its way. True, also, and forcibly put in great part, notwithstanding a certain vagueness of thought and expression which leads us to expect and look for a definiteness which somehow never appears. But, even if we could go along with the whole of the thought, and were quite clear as to the precise meaning of all the expressions, there is that in the bantering tone of this extract to which we should strongly object. “ Misery,” says a modern writer, “ is always credulous.” It is this credulity of despairing misery—this eager grasp on the part of men drowning in floods of anxiety at any straw of a hope—this frantic delusion (if it be always a delusion) that the Great Father of all has sent them a special guidance to a much-needed way of deliverance—of which the preacher here condescends to make fun. That “ mortgage of a thousand dollars,” with all the ten thousand sorrows, and schemes, and privations, and mortifications, and tears, and perhaps self-reproaches, and prayers, it had led to; and the impulse that came at last as though in answer to these prayers, and the consequent eager resolve to indite a letter, and the difficult task of composing it, and the final despatch of it as a messenger of deliverance, and the long waiting in vain for an answer, and then only the old chains at last, but heavier still than before—imagine a brother minister taking all that, and dangling it all in front of his pulpit in order that a well-fed congregation (many of them, perhaps, with much money out on mortgage) might sit and laugh at it in their pews! Let any false hopes on such matters be exposed by all means: it is no act of cruelty but of mercy to save men from such non-nutritious and even poisonous food; but you must not do so

with a blow, still less with a gibe. And this applies to all preaching, if its aim be correct. Whatever its peculiar topic or manner in individual cases, whatever the unavoidable variety as to line of argument, method of treatment, choice of expression, and so on, we take it that all preaching whatever, to a greater or less extent, should be preaching to the heart. The great message of Christianity is to "the weary and heavy-laden." Even of the very worst, except absolute reprobates and "irreconcilables" (if there are such), we are to "have compassion," "pulling them out of the fire." Never in any case, therefore, on this score alone, ought the ambassador of a merciful Saviour, when speaking in his official capacity, to indulge in flippancy and light talk. We would not be so unjust as to say that it is always a sign of want of feeling ; but it is always in danger of looking like it, to say the least.

The above extract may also suggest to us another thought on this point. Respect to man's feelings is not all. There is such a thing to be remembered as reverence to God and His word. And preachers who allow themselves to be jocose, seldom do remember this as they should—very seldom, indeed, can. The love of being funny and amusing, and of saying something grotesque, and out of place, seems to grow upon them to such a degree that they are hardly aware of the nature and extent of their faults. Like other persons who play with edge tools, they often cut to the quick where they only intended to arouse and startle ; and, meaning only to be a little *outré* and improper, find themselves on the very verge of the irreverent and profane. We believe this to have been the case with Mr. Beecher in preaching as above. He had no intention, we are sure, of profanity ; but he has certainly been guilty of that kind of irreverence which consists in not remembering the sacred nature of the subject he had in hand. Such forgetfulness is always, in our judgment, a very serious fault in a preacher ; and the present instance of it appears to be one of a peculiarly lamentable description. What is the subject which is being discussed ? "Divine influence on the human mind"—the operation of God's Spirit upon ours. Great and grievous mistakes are undoubtedly made on this point. But do not these very mistakes derive a sacredness from the sacredness of their subject, like the censers of Korah and his company, which were at once hallowed and profane? And ought any man who professes to know better, to adopt, and repeat, and aggravate their unintentional irreverence by wilful levity of his own. If ever the nature of the Infinite comes into immediate contact with the guilty nature of man—if ever we are close to the Highest himself, it is when his Eternal Spirit condescends to

lay His hand on the secret spring of our thoughts. It is like the "still small voice" which Elijah heard in the desert. If ever a prophet ought to be grave, or to cover his head with the mantle of his office, it is with such a subject on his lips. How far Mr. Beecher has here departed from this ideal, we hardly like to describe.

We must confess to feeling very strongly on the question of these pleasantries in the pulpit; and would venture, therefore, to remonstrate against them on other grounds still. Does it never occur to those who utter them to try and consider their real worth—we mean their real worth and wit as compared with other things of the kind? Surely they are very sorry jests at the best. With the exception of jokes at the expense of decency, jokes at the expense of sacred things are the very cheapest of all jests. Almost any fool can contrive to extract a laugh from the breasts of other fools in this way. We have seen a pert and conceited child in a Sunday-school—too ignorant to be ashamed of its pertness—convulse a whole class-full of little simpletons by the silly profanity of its answers. The very incongruity and impropriety of such jesting helps it to pass for true wit. People laugh at a joke from the pulpit, however stupid or poor it may be, just as they would laugh at a donkey in church, because it ought not to be there. But it is a miserable and beggarly stratagem to take advantage of such a feeling. No man of true power, or proper pride, or legitimate desire for the approbation of worthy judges, would ever go out of his way for such tinsel, or stoop to pick it up if it came in his path. And this is not only a question of mere personal dignity, be it said. The preacher who degrades himself by the use of such unworthy artifices, degrades his office as well, which is a sacred, a solemn trust, never entrusted to him for that end: "Let no man despise thee." We believe there are engravings of some of these preachers, who pride themselves on being "the cause of laughter in others," in which they are represented as standing in their own pulpits in the act and attitude of preaching, and with the open Bible before them. How would it suit to have written underneath, and for such a label to go down to posterity,—"Many and many a joke have we heard from him from that place?"

With regard to Mr. Beecher himself, we are by no means intending to imply that all his jests are poor ones. On the contrary, we give him credit for considerable power in that line; but we should esteem him much more if he did not display that power, but restrain it. As it is, we are fully of opinion that he is half ashamed of himself on this point, and agrees with us in his heart; but that is scarcely to be reckoned as an improvement

of his case. *Video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor*—is not an apology, but a confession. He tells us, indeed, in the *English Independent*, in an article in the number of that paper for January 27th, 1870, that the smart things which he is in the habit of preaching come upon him unawares, and are a greater surprise to himself than to those who hear him. But how is this to be reconciled with the abundance of such *maculae*? People do not usually make a habit of being surprised. Neither can we quite see how it agrees with the set defence which he has attempted ("Plymouth Pulpit," p. 363), of what he does not scruple to call "the divine spirit of mirth;" or with the fact that so many of these his unpleasant pleasantries are to be found printed in cold blood in all parts of his book. No doubt a man, in a great hurry, may lay his hand on a jester's cap by mistake, and may even go the length of placing it on his head; but if he proceeds a step further, and has his photograph published in that head-dress, the world will suspect a mistake of a somewhat different kind.

Indeed, the evil effect of such things on the world is not the least reason against them. It is true that they are popular with certain classes, and that they gain attention and applause; it is possible, also, in some cases, that, by thus opening the door of the mind, the more legitimate parts of a discourse may be also enabled to make an entrance. We have heard of "Philosophy in sport made Science in earnest," and we are not altogether prepared to deny that there may be something sometimes of a similar kind in religion. But the general rule, we are well assured, runs in a different line. The hearers are tickled by such sermons, not instructed; they are not amended, but amused. As a proof of this, in the congregations that are accustomed to such a style of discourse, there is always an appearance of expectation to be seen—a kind of long-suffering toleration during the solemn intervals—accompanied by a subdued but constant twinkling expression about the eyes which is evidently ready for a decided outbreak as soon as the expected signal is given. The "smart bits," in a word, are watched for, the others are endured. The smart bits, consequently, are remembered—the others are forgotten. In reading Mr. Beecher's sermons we have ourselves found this to be the case. We have found ourselves on the look out for the *facetiae* as in reading a production of Thomas Hood's; we have found a perpetual battle going on between "grave and gay" in the sermon; and we have found the "gay," as might naturally be expected, gaining the battle in the end, and driving poor "grave" triumphantly out of the field of the mind. And such must always be the case, more or less,

from the very nature of the combination. If you bring together such discordant elements you do not ensure "peace, but a sword"; and you inaugurate a war to the knife in which one of the two elements must perforce be destroyed. Neither is it at all difficult to determine which of the two it must be. It is easy to ruin the beautiful, easy to make wisdom ridiculous—easy, by a few touches of caricature, to make a noble and impressive portrait a thing of scorn and contempt. Only a few beholders will be able, by a great effort, to neutralize the effect of these touches, and to detect, beneath them and in spite of them, the loveliness they have ruined. The great mass will simply do that which they do with a parody on a poem. They either forget the poem and remember the parody, or they only remember the first through the disfiguring veil of the second. We remember an instructive illustration of this truth which struck us much at the time. A certain English pulpit orator, famous for his power and popularity, but still better known perhaps for his pulpit comicalities, went to preach in a little chapel in an insignificant little town. We were amongst the multitudes who heard and admired—admired much, but not all. There were some things very striking and beautiful, and some in infamous taste—one, in particular, we remember well, in which, comparing that holy influence of which we have been speaking in the present article to the rain, the preacher said, "sometimes the influences of God's Spirit are like the gently-stealing shower, filling the heart almost unfelt with the dew of His grace; but sometimes they come on like a thunderstorm with all the artillery of hail on the roof—and, by the way, I should be uncommonly glad (it was a close evening in summer) if we had a thunderstorm now, and a good rattling shower of hail to break some of these window panes, for it is unbearably hot in this place!" A few days after the local paper came out with a glowing account of the great man's advent and doings, and of the sermon he had preached; but, of all he had said and dwelt upon, this precious piece of buffoonery was the only thing given at full length. That is a sad proof of the effect of such ill-placed jocoseness on most minds. It attracts attention, it is true, but it does so to itself, to the detriment of the preacher's true mission, and to the serious injury, therefore, both of his hearers and himself. As with the young cuckoo, in short, in the nest of a song bird, so is it, as a general rule, with the introduction of this element of facetiousness in the exposition of the Bible—all other sources of sound are displaced by it, and leave this one noise in their stead.

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## Biblical Criticism.

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come [בָּאָה חִמְתָּה כָּל-הַגּוֹנִים] : and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."—Haggai ii. 6, 7.

(Continued from p. 216.)

**A**ND how does this exposition agree with facts ? Not at all, as we think ; neither in the age of the prophet nor at any subsequent period. And, moreover, there was wanting to it what must ever have placed it in unfavourable comparison with the temple of Solomon, namely, the shekinah glory, and the divine afflatus. Grotius has put the matter admirably :—“Quod profecto neque de mole operis, neque de materia, neque de arte, neque de ornatu dici posse, historia horum temporum in sacris literis et apud Josephum, collata cum ea quae est de Templo Solomonis, indubitatum facit. Adde, quod Hebraeorum magistri annotant, duas maximas dotes defuisse templo posteriori, quae priori affuerant ; conspicuam quandam lucem divinae majestatae indicem, et divinum afflatum. Sed quo Templum hoc posterius priori praestitum sit, ibi quidem breviter ostendit Deus ; cum pacem suam, id est, gratium et benevolentiam, in eo templo se quasi foedere certo stabiliturum dicit.”\*

Manifestly, therefore, the positions taken up by Hitzig and Maurer are untenable—inconsistent with the actual contents of the prophecy, and equally so with undeniable historical facts. But further. To Hitzig we object with Maurer, that he has mis-translated חִמְתָּה, *chēmdāh*. It is not synonymous with בְּחִרָּה, *bebchār*—choice, or concretely, *that which is chosen*. Nevertheless the verb חִמַּד, *chāmadh*, nor its derivative noun חִמְתָּה, *chemdāh* has any such meaning ; and so the rendering of חִמְתָּה in the part of the Seventy by τὸν ἐκλεκτὸν is accordingly mista<sup>l</sup>ship. This, however, is not the only instance in which the Septuaginta Eng. conversion is erroneous, notwithstanding its general accuracy. Furthermore, Hitzig's assumption that “of all nations” is in

\* *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ, lib. v. cap. 14.* *ost.*

simply "out of" or "from among all nations" is equally gratuitous and unwarranted. Such a signification would seem rather than an ordinary genitival construction to require some construction with כִּי, *mīn*, as, for example, מִקְּבָּלָהָיִם, *mīkkōl-haggōim*, or מִגְּרֶבֶּה כָּלָחָדִים, *mīgērēbh kol-haggōim*, *out of*, or *out of the midst of all peoples*.

To Maurer it must be objected, in addition to what has already been urged against his interpretation, that if חֶמְדָּתָה means *deliciae*, or *dona pretiosissima*, it certainly does not make good sense with בָּאָה, *ūbha'ü*, *shall come*. We do not speak of oblations or offerings as *coming* into the temple; we say rather that they are *brought*. This sense of *chēmdāth* would require either that בָּאָה should be employed in Hiphil, with *chēmdāth*, in the accusative, and הִנֵּה as nominative, or else that another verb more in agreement with this meaning should be substituted. But supposing this to be the meaning, viz., that "the most precious gifts of all peoples" should be brought into the temple at Jerusalem, it is still equally out of harmony with the context. If this were all that the prophet had to promise, then certainly the magnificent exordium by which the promise is introduced to our notice, is not only uncalled for, but is painfully akin to empty bombast. Are heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land, to be thrown into commotion, and are all nations to be afflicted with tumult, merely to supply a plentiful exchequer to the second temple? Certainly not. Thus to interpret is to sememasculate the prophecy of all appropriate meaning. It is to plturn the sublime into the ridiculous.

gl. It may also be remarked that הַמִּתְּחִילָה is in the singular, not the plural number. Might we not, if Maurer's is the true meaning, have expected the plural מִתְּחִילּוֹת than the singular חֶמְדָּתָה, as it actually occurs in the text? Maurer's interpretation would also it have required, as Hitzig remarks, a wholly different construction, sion, בְּלָחָדָה הַנְּגִים. See his remarks above given. If the himseve interpretations are then incorrect, as we have already song,wn them to be, what is the true signification of this propem,ty? We reply, that it is necessary to refer the words to the sorg,ing Messiah, in order rightly to understand their meaning. their prophecy is clearly Messianic.

ording to this view, בָּאָה חֶמְדָּתָה כָּלָחָדִים is correctly trans-

lated “*the desire (or the desired) of all nations shall come.*”\* Here *chēmdāh* is understood to refer to a single person, namely, the Christ. And (1), this interpretation agrees admirably with the original. For *רְגָנָן* is, as we have seen, a noun in the singular and not in the plural number; and furthermore, the meaning here ascribed to it—unlike the meanings given to it by Maurer and Hitzig, is its true primary signification. This word does not, as they would have it, mean either “the most precious gifts,” or “the chosen ones.” These are meanings foreign to the word, and are arrived at merely by inference from its true and generally acknowledged signification.

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*(To be continued.)*

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## *The Preacher's Finger-Post.*

### **MAY MEETINGS, OR THE MONTH FOR TRUMPETS.**

“And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.”—Numb. xxix. 1.

THE Jews had several great national convocations, such as the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, or the Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Trumpets. This last is the feast referred to in the text. This was held on the first day of the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year, which was the same as the first month

of the civil year. These national convocations were useful to the Jews in many ways. They counteracted the tendency of the people to form themselves into separate cliques, or clans, and united them in common sympathies and aims. They served to promote also commercial interests by furnishing facilities for mutual exchanges, and opening the ways of trade and business between various classes. They especially tended to promote public consociation in worship.

The nearest things in England to these great Judaic convocations are our meetings in

\* Luther translates—“*Da soll dann Kommen aller Heiden Trost.*”

London every year. The peculiarity of the Feast of Trumpets was this, the continual sounding of trumpets from morning till evening. The blast was loud and incessant. During the month of May in London the "religious world" (as it is called) for one whole month has its ears assailed with blasts of trumpets.

These trumpets may be divided into two classes, the censurable and the commendable.

I. The CENSURABLE. These are many—very loud, and, we fear, very popular.

First : There is the trump of *bigotry*. The sounds of this trumpet, when interpreted, are "*our Church*," *our body*, *our denomination*, *our principles*. It means—blessing to the sect, damnation to all outsiders.

Secondly: There is the trump of *adulation*. This trumpet is generally blown at the vote of thanks to the chairman, or the anniversary preacher, men chosen by the society not always on the ground of intellectual or moral merit, but frequently on the ground of monetary considerations. If the coffer has been enriched by their services, they are overwhelmed with the deafening blast of this trumpet. We have often seen the faces of such men suffused with crimson hues under the sounds of this clarion.

Thirdly : There is the trump of *a corrupt evangelism*. The evangelism that is advocated in some of these convocations is of the most sensuous and selfish

description. It is *fleshy* and *mercenary*. Its appeals are to animal sympathies and personal interests. It seeks to stir up the fear of misery, not the fear of sin—the love of happiness, not the love of truth and virtue. The notes of this trumpet are out of harmony with the spirit of Christ, and the divine melodies of the Gospel.

Fourthly: There is the trump of *vanity*. The great design of this trumpet is to awaken the uproarious cheering of the thoughtless crowd for the trumpeters. Every note expresses the wish. How we have seen performers at some of those convocations perorate, dramatize, and blow in order to get the miserable "hear, hear," and clapping of hands !

Fifthly : There is the trump of *cant*. The resolutions that are advocated and adopted at those meetings have often the aroma of unreality and pious pretensions. The sacred name of the Great One is introduced often as a mere matter of form, and sometimes in connection with most questionable enterprises. There are stereotyped phrases in resolutions, handed down from age to age, such as "This meeting, recognising the hand of Almighty God," "This meeting would express its gratitude to Sovereign Grace," &c., &c.

Sixthly : There is the trump of *officialism*. Worldly interests are bound up too often

with the enterprises advocated in those convocations. There are the stipendiary secretaries, and well-paid deputations, who are looking forward to their summer excursions. No trumpet is more skilfully and constantly played than the trumpet of officialism. Indeed, the officials would regard all the other trumpets as almost useless, unless they charmed the hearers into giving largely to the "cause." Why is it that these May convocations are seldom attended by the most thoughtful men or women of our Churches? Why is it that they are a by-word and a scorn to thinking outsiders? It is because of these hideous trumpets.

With every honest effort to alleviate human woe, and to extend the beneficent influences of Christianity, we have the profoundest sympathy. To these objects we have consecrated our energies, and spent the morning and noon of our life. In so far as the din of these trumpets impedes the work, they become, therefore, increasingly distressing to us: they are not made of God's silver, they are of Satanic metal.

II. The **COMMENDABLE**. Thank God, in these May convocations there are trumpets of the Divine metal and mould,—trumpets which are blown by true souls, and sound the true notes.

First: There is the trump of *genuine philanthropy*. By gen-

uine philanthropy I mean not the mere love of a sect or a country, but the love of man as man, of whatever tribe or clime. Thank God there is much of true philanthropy in some of these convocations. Many of the speakers are in vital sympathy with true philanthropy, and many of the hearers too. Every note of this trumpet is music in our ears.

Secondly: There is the trump of *reverent devotion*. This trumpet expels the fliprant and the frivolous, calls up the serious and the devout. The ostensible purposes of most of these gatherings, are the immortal interests of humanity and the glory of God, and those who are penetrated with the importance of these purposes will feel that solemnity becometh the occasion.

Thirdly: There is the trump of *spiritual incentive*. Whilst in some of these convocations motives for action are addressed which degrade the human soul, misrepresent Christianity, dis honour God, in others motives of the right class are enforced. The incentives presented for spiritual action are drawn from the beauty of holiness, the love of Christ and the claims of the Infinite Father.

CONCLUSION: May the censurable trumpets in these convocations become fewer and weaker every year, may they be speedily shivered and silenced; and may the true trumpets of truth, love, genuine philan-

thropy, and Spiritual Christianity rapidly multiply until like the trumpets of Jubilee of old they shall be heard throughout all the land !

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THINGS THAT OCCUR WHEN MEN ARE FIRST BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

“ And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone.”—John i. 42.

THE text points to a wonderful meeting, the meeting of Peter with Christ. This meeting was the fountain of wonderful issues, not only to Peter, but to humanity and the universe ; issues ever widening, ever beneficent, and ever enduring. This meeting led to the endowment of Peter with that Divine idea which was at once the foundation of a universal Church, and the key to unlock the door of redemptive mercy to the world. The context informs us that the meeting was brought about by Andrew, Peter's brother. “ He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ ; and he brought him to Jesus.” Man can render no greater service to his country or his race than to bring men to Jesus. But a man to do this must be a true disciple of Christ himself—Andrew was one. And he must do it not as a dry duty, but as a delightful privilege—thus Andrew did it. Our true work

is not to bring men to our little systems, sects, or churches, but to Christ ; unless we bring them to Him, we render them no lasting service.

The text leads us to notice two things that occur when man is first brought consciously into the presence of Christ :—

I. He is brought into contact with that type of character **OF WHICH HE IS MOST SIGNALLY DESTITUTE.**

First : *The type of character which Christ now held forth to Peter was Christian firmness.* He said, “ Thou art Simon, the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone.” “ A stone” is the best emblem which the earth furnishes of firmness. Nothing more firm than the granite rocks. What is Christian firmness ? Not *obstinacy*. Obstinacy is such a pertinacious adherence to an opinion or a purpose as will yield neither to reason nor persuasion. Firmness is not hardness. It is foreign to the rough, and harsh, and insolent. It is allied to the deepest tenderness. He who set his face as flint was tender. Christian firmness involves two things—enlightened convictions of Christian realities, and fixedness of affections upon the Christian's God. It is a rooting and grounding of the soul in truth and God. (1.) There is no *nobility* without firmness. Whilst the obstinate man is despised, and the fickle man

untrusted, the firm man commands. There is a majesty about him that commands reverence. Firmness is an essential element in all that is noble and heroic in character. (2.) There is no *usefulness* without firmness. The vacillating man is as unstable as water and cannot excel. Instability is failure in every department of life. The firm men do the work of the world. (3.) There is no *godliness* without firmness. Godliness begins in centering the soul upon the Supreme Good. "O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise."

Secondly: *This firmness Peter sadly lacked.* Constitutionally, Peter was a man of strong impulse and surging passion. He was, therefore, liable to vacillation and instability. This changefulness painfully shows itself even after his conversion. From impulse you may find him rushing to meet Christ, and endeavouring to walk on the sea, and for lack of faith about to sink into the whelming waters. No man confessed the divinity of Christ with more explicitness and intensity than Peter, and yet afterwards denied Him thrice, and thrice with oaths. He was the first man to receive a Gentile into the Christian Church, and thus brave the opposition of the Jews; and yet subsequently we find him refusing to sit down at the Lord's table with converted Gentiles, and

thus exposing himself to the righteous censures of St. Paul.

Now, Christ, in holding up to Peter at their first meeting firmness, held up that very phase or type of character which he most signally lacked. When Christ said, "Thou shalt be called Cephas—a stone," his inmost soul must have responded, "I am not a stone; rather than a rock I am a reed shaken by the wind." When souls come to Christ He makes them feel their *missing* qualities of good, their lacking attributes of virtue. To the dishonest He holds forth righteousness; to the false, faithfulness; to the greedy, generosity; to the unclean, chastity; to the sceptical, faith; to the profane, reverence. Thus He touches the soul on its weak and vicious points.

II. He is brought into contact with a type of character TO REACH WHICH IS HIS DESTINY. "Thou shalt be called Cephas." Christian firmness was the idea now held forth to Peter's soul. It blazed as a Divine light before him. Ever afterwards, we have no doubt, he struggled earnestly to attain it. And the struggle involved a moral revolution within. In reading his history, his sermons, and his letters, we see his gradual progress towards this firmness, until in his martyrdom it reached its earthly consummation. On the day of Pentecost, how firm! Standing a prisoner before the Sanhed-

drim, how firm ! How firm in his preaching to the Gentiles ; how firm in his first epistle ! We first meet with Peter uncertain as a shifting cloud, and as noisy as a tempest ; we leave him as settled as a star, and as serene in soul as a summer's eve.

**CONCLUSION.**—First : *Christ holds out to all His disciples an ideal.* You have the ideal (1) in His teachings, and (2) in His example.

Secondly : This ideal is *at variance with our natural dispositions.* It was so now with Peter. In his case Christ held forth the morally firm to the fickle and the turbulent.

Thirdly : Though the idea is at variance with our natural disposition, *we must struggle after and reach it.* What is our grand work in life ? To realise those ideals of character that Jesus of Nazareth holds forth to our souls. Blessed be His name for those ideals, they are the lights of the moral world.

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#### PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

“That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”—1 Thes. ii. 12.

In this verse Paul expresses the grand design of all his labours amongst the Thessalonian Christians, and it expresses, indeed, the grand design of the Gospel itself, and all its true ministries. The words lead us to consider practical Christianity in two lights

— in the sublime nobility of its life, and in the profound reasonableness of its motive.

**I. IN THE SUBLIME NOBILITY OF ITS LIFE.** “That ye would walk worthy (or worthily) of God.”

First : Man is the *creature* of God, and to walk worthy of Him is to walk worthy of the *nature* He has given him. That workmanship, and that only, is *worthy* of the artificer, whether it be painting, engineering, architecture, or authorship, that comes fully up to the measure of the author's intelligence and genius. The world abounds with works unworthy of their authors. Man's nature, as well as the nature of all other creatures, is “*worthy of God.*” But man has a power to use that nature unworthily. The ocean rolls, the stars shine, forests grow, and landscapes bloom, all according to the nature which the Creator gave them : not so with man ; he often acts *below* his nature, and *against* it too. What is his nature ? His nature shows that he was made to control the animal by the intellectual, the intellectual by the moral, and the moral by God ; in other words, that the body should be under the intellect, the intellect under the conscience, and the conscience under the Divine. This is evidently the Divine plan in His organization, and he only acts “*worthy of God*” as he carries out this plan in his daily life.

Every star that shines, every plant that grows, every sentient life, work out the Divine plan of their existence, and, therefore, are worthy of their Maker ; but man in his fallen state acts not according to the plan of his existence, and, therefore, neither the wisdom, goodness, nor justice of God is seen in His daily life.

Secondly : Man is the *offspring* of God, and to walk worthily of Him is to walk worthy of that *relationship*. He is our Father ; He is the Creator of the material universe, but He is the Father of souls. To walk worthy of such a Father is (1.) To *love* Him *supremely*. He is the best Being in the universe, and the nearest to us, and He should absorb our paramount affections. (2.) To *serve* Him *devotedly*. He wills only what is right in itself, and best for us, therefore, our obedience should be loving, joyous, and unremitting. (3.) To *represent* Him *faithfully*. Children are the reflection of their parents, not so much in form and feature, as in morals and life. For a son to walk worthy of his father, is to walk so as to give a fair presentation of his character. If the father is profane and false, greedy and profligate, he could only walk worthy of him by living a similar life. What is the character of the Great Father ? He is infinitely holy, inflexibly true, unboundedly loving ;—to walk worthy of Him

is to reflect in our daily life these glorious attributes of His.

The other light in which the words lead us to consider practical Christianity is

II. IN THE PROFOUND REASONABLENESS OF ITS MOTIVE. The motive is contained in the words, “Who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.” The expression, “his kingdom and glory” refers undoubtedly to the Gospel system. The Gospel is an *imperialism*—a “kingdom.” It is an authoritative power ; it is a reigning force ; it is not for speculation, but for regulation. It is a *glorious imperialism*—“Kingdom and glory,” or a glorious kingdom. The Gospel is, indeed, a glorious imperialism ; it rules to redeem, enoble, and bless with the glory, even of God Himself. The profound reasonableness contained in this expression will be seen by two remarks.

First : The grand design of the *Gospel* is to enable men to act in a manner worthy of God. The *Gospel* does two things towards it. (1.) Shows man the way to do it. He who wishes to know how to act worthily of his Maker, may find it out in a minute by opening any page in the *New Testament*. He will find expressions like these—“This is the will of God that ye believe on His Son ;” and again, “This is the will of God, even your sanctification,” running through all this glorious *Gospel*. (2.) Sup-

plies man with helps to do it. He gives examples, encouragements, motives, &c. A man, therefore, who comes into this glorious system, comes into a circle of facts, and doctrines, influences, and revelations, that enables him to walk "worthy" of his Maker.

Secondly: The grand design of God in calling man into the Gospel is that they should walk worthy of Him. "God who hath called (or rather calleth) you." How are men brought into this Gospel kingdom? By chance, or by mere human endeavour? No; by the calling of God. There are millions who are not even in its letter, and there are millions of those who are in its letter, who have never come into its spirit, and under its power. It is God who " calleth :"—calleth—not miraculously, but by means—not capriciously, but by system—not partially, but universally.

What motive to influence man can be more profoundly reasonable than the motive we have here—the motive of walking worthy of God? The life of practical Christianity is a sublimely *rational* life. Hence genuine religion and true wisdom are convertible terms in the vocabulary of Heaven.

**CONCLUSION.**—This is the life of practical Christianity. Can there be a sublimer life, a life more noble? Sceptics have written down the Christian life as a mean and morbid thing—a thing of cant, sickly senti-

ment, intolerant spirit, and narrow creed; but this is a foul calumny. Is there a grander life in the universe than that of "walking worthily of God?" And this is the life of him who lives in harmony with Christianity.

#### THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF GOD'S LAWS.

"The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes for our good always."—Deut. vi. 24.

The doctrine of this text is that God's laws are for the good of His subjects; that the basis of all His laws is benevolence, that their foundation is love.

#### I. THIS FACT IS WELL ATTESTED.

(1.) *In the nature of the commands.* Take the *physical laws* whose infringement involves heavy physical penalty, and which of them could be relaxed without serious injury to the man. Are not God's commandments as revealed in the statutes of physical laws, e.g. concerning indolence, intemperance, lust, "for our good always?" Take the *laws of conscience*, that approve the virtuous, the truthful, the noble, which of them could be reversed without hopelessly ruining our moral nature? Take the *laws of the Decalogue*, and which can be practically repealed in human conduct without involving great misfortune? Are not the Divine statutes about murder, theft,

envy, &c., "for our good always?" Take the great *statutes* of the *New Testament*, about believing in Christ, loving Christ, following Christ, and in their fitness to meet our mental and spiritual wants, in their adaptedness to lift us into "the blessed life," are they not "for our good always?" This fact is well attested also—

(2) *In the experience of His subjects.* The loyal subjects of God have ever been His happiest creatures. The utterance of the joyful heart is, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." "In keeping of thy commandments is great reward." Broken laws lead to broken hearts. The deepest wail of the sorrowful is "I have sinned."

II. THIS FACT REVEALS THE DIVINE CHARACTER. Since all God's statutes are for man's good, such laws reveal Him as being the God (1.) *Of unbounded love.* Other sovereigns have too often framed and enforced laws for their own pomp, aggrandisement, and glory. The so-called "Divine right of kings" has generally been a right to wrong the peoples. History of nation after nation shows that

"Empire based upon a wrong  
Is rotten through and through." But the Supreme Sovereign of the universe, by His essential nature of love, is infinitely above all the designs of the cruel, the tyrannical, the am-

bitious, and the selfish. No one individual of the meanest class of even His rebellious subjects but could truthfully join in the grand tribute to the King of kings, "The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes for our good always." The fact stated in our text reveals God as of (2.) *Complete wisdom.* Not only is the design of God's every law benevolent, but its tendency is beneficent. They are adapted, as well as intended, to make the obedient happy. They harmonize exactly with all the natures with which they have to do. None, as do human laws, ever need repealing, or even modifying. They declare an Omniscient Lawgiver. Moreover, they reveal a God of (3) *Absolute independence.* He does not need the services of His creatures. His glory is underived. He seeks to confer rather than to receive, to bestow rather than to obtain. His laws are some of the myriad channels by which His gifts roll to men. Thus His every law is intended and designed for His creatures' good.

III. THIS FACT EXPLAINS THE CONDITION OF ALL HUMAN HAPPINESS. What is it? Not the search for it as an end. For "he that seeketh his life shall lose it." Self-seeking can never lead to happiness; and to seek our own good, even though it be by obeying God's statutes, is but self-seeking still. Obey, because it is right to obey the

Infinitely Holy, and the Supreme Good. Serve, because you "are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ." And in such obedience, in such service, thou shalt find "The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes for our good always."

*Bristol. U. R. THOMAS.*

**THE TREES OF THE LORD ; A SPRING DISCOURSE.**

"The trees of the Lord are full of sap ; the cedars which he hath planted."—Psa. civ. 16.

Of the great order of pine trees, honoured of God to perform the most important services in the economy of nature, and more useful to man than any other kind, one group, that of the cedars, stands out in distinct and well-marked prominence. Of the cedars of Lebanon, the cedars of the Himalaya, and the cedars of the Sierra Nevada, there are various reasons why the Lord may be said to have a special interest and property in each of them, they are "trees of the Lord."

**I. ON ACCOUNT OF THE PECULIARITIES OF THEIR STRUCTURE.** They reveal a new idea of the creative mind. They are neither Phoenogamo, or flowering plants, nor Cryptogamo, or flowerless, and have many points of alliance with club-mosses. They combine the highest appearance with the lowest structure, and are thus

links binding together the two great orders of vegetation. In them we have an example among plants of a common principle in God's moral procedure towards His creatures, choosing the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and giving more abundant honour to that which lacked. Into the earthen vessel of the humble organisation of the cedars He has poured the glory of the highest development, that the glory may be seen to be all His own. And in this wondrous combination of types in the "trees of the Lord" we have a dim foreshadowing of "Him who dwelt in the bush ;" who united in Himself the highest and the lowest, God and man, in one person for ever ; and who still, though in the midst of the throne, dwells with the man that is of an humble and contrite heart. The cedars are "trees of the Lord."

**II. ON ACCOUNT OF THE ANTIQUITY OF THEIR TYPE.** Of this class Preadamite forests were principally composed. In every stratum in which arborescent fossils occur we can trace this antique tree pattern. We burn the relics of extinct cedars in our household fires as the microscopic investigation of the coal formation reveals. They form the evergreen link between the ages and the zones, growing now as they grew in the remote past, inhabiting the same latitudes, and preserving

the same appearances in bulk and figure. Universal in space and universal in time they are monuments of the unchangeableness of the Ancient of Days—proofs indisputable that the vegetable kingdom did not commence as monads, or vital points, but as organisms so noble and complicate that even the most bigoted advocate of the development theory must admit that they could not have been formed by the agency of physical force.

During untold ages the cedars were the sole examples of forest vegetation. They afford an illustration of a general law of the deepest philosophic import, namely, that the first introduced animals or plants of any class have been *combining types*. From the side, as it were, of those pre-adamite cedars God took the ribs, of which He made the graceful palm-tree to yield its welcome shade and fruit in the thirsty desert, and the beautiful apple tree to clothe itself with its bridal dress of blossoms under the smiling, tearful skies of the northern spring. Thus is illustrated that the ceaseless working of the Creator hitherto has been exercised only in the eternal unfolding of the original conception. The cedars are “trees of the Lord.”

**III. ON ACCOUNT OF THE MAJESTY OF THEIR APPEARANCE.** Religion and poetry have sounded so loudly the praise of the cedar that it has become

the most renowned natural monument in the world. At an elevation of six thousand feet, with their roots firmly planted in the moraines of extinct glaciers, with their trunks riven and furrowed by lightning, with the snows of Lebanon gleaming white through their dusky foliage, who can fail to feel the force of the Psalmist's words “The trees of the Lord are full of sap,” &c.

HUGH MACMILLAN, M.A.

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#### THE CORN OF WHEAT.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”—John xii. 24—26.

We have here an illustration, set forth under the form of an analogy, of the work of Christ for us and the work of Christ in us.

**I. THE ANALOGY IN THE WORK OF CHRIST FOR US.** First: *The sower casts the seed into the ground*: suggesting that the death of Christ was according to the *will and appointment of God*. The *Father sent the Son*: His coming and death *fore-ordained*: anticipated in the Divine plan: *foretold*. The cup His *Father gave Him to drink*. Secondly:

*The seed* dies in virtue of its nature, because it is a seed and not a stone: suggesting that the *will of Christ himself* was one with His Father's. "I lay down my life of myself." His death a voluntary surrender on His part as well as an appointment on the part of the Father. In this is its virtue. Thirdly: *The soil* has powers in it in virtue of which the seed dies. There is a power in human nature through which Christ was brought to death—*sin*. The efficient *cause* of His death in God and Himself, not in man: man the *instrument*, of his own choice, hence the guilt is his. Fourthly: *The fruit*—the result. (1.) The dying seed begets *new life*. Christ has introduced into the world a new life. This is true individually, socially, politically. The nature of the life is determined by the seed sown, not by the soil. Whatever varieties there may be in the Divine life as it assumes outward form, the principle of life is one. (2.) *Fruitfulness by multiplying*. Thirty, sixty, a hundredfold. Each community, church, heart, a centre of this process. Christ alone till He was crucified, then He began to draw all men to Himself. His drawing mostly gentle and imperceptible as growth, as the influence of the warm sunshine and the soft rain on the new life in the soil.

## II. THE ANALOGY IN THE WORK OF CHRIST IN US (v. 25,

26). The analogy is carried on in these verses and made personal. First: It is *the will of God* that we should lose our life—corresponding with the dying of Christ. We are to die daily. The natural man must die: we cease from self only as we die to self. Secondly: The will of God in this matter becomes *our will* as we become Christ's. This is the difference between the natural man and the spiritual man: so far as the natural man is concerned, we resist; so far as the spiritual man is concerned, we comply increasingly. The blessed life is the life of perfect and cheerful compliance. The key to the whole life of Christ is *self-surrender*: His whole life a life of voluntary self-sacrifice; ours to be like His in this constant unceasing dying to self, and afterwards there will be the exultation. (Ver. 26.) Life in Christ leads to likeness to Christ and to the glory of Christ.

Thirdly: *The attitude of the world may be as healthful to the spiritual life* as the active forces in the soil to the seed. Enmity was busy about Christ at this time; they sought to kill Him, and did ultimately. Enmity about us often in proportion to our fidelity to the higher life, is of advantage as making our course and conflict clear to us. While the friendship of the world is dangerous to us, a subtle influence, the enmity of

the world, at least, will never be mistaken for the friendship of God. The planting of the seed calls forth the slumbering powers in the soil: the powers are there, the presence of an occasion awakes them. The soil only destroys the husk, but develops the life of the seed. Fourthly: *The fruit.* (1. *Reviving.* Dying with Christ gives a *new life.* The new life springs from the germ within the corn; is of the same nature as the corn: human nature is susceptible of the Divine life;

there is a germ of the Divine nature in man, and this is the hope of man: the spiritual life partakes of the nature of the germ. The blade: emotions, longings, drawings—the ear: a decided life—the full corn in the ear: the reliability and certainty of a consistent and maturing life. (2.) *Fruitfulness:* the law of growth suggested by the figure of the seed, not only rapid and sure, but manifold.

R. V. PRYCE, LL.B., M.A.

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## Seeds of Sermons on the Book of Proverbs.

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### THE INFAMOUS.

“Proud and haughty scorner is his name who dealeth in proud wrath.”—Prov. xxi. 24.

THERE are two very abhorrent things in the text, an infamous name and infamous conduct.

I. AN INFAMOUS NAME. “Proud and haughty scorner is his name.” The first appellative in an infamous name is pride, and this is an ignominious thing. What is pride? Exaggerated self-esteem. The proud man is one who has grossly overrated his own merits, and who lives and acts in the absurd fiction. The next appellative in an infamous name is haughtiness. Haughtiness is pride in its last stage of moral absurdity. It is pride run into

arrogance and imperious contempt. The third appellative in an infamous name is “scorner.” Scorn is extreme haughtiness. The “scorner” is a man that despises every thing that does not tally with his own notions, and recognise his own imaginary superiority. A more odious character than a “scorner” is not to be found in any of the ranks of infamy. The man to whom this name applies must be characterized by three things.

First: By *untruthfulness.* The proud man lives in falsehood. He is inspired with ideas concerning himself that are so outrageously untrue to fact, that men laugh at him and despise him.

Secondly: By *inhumanity.* To

the "proud" and "haughty" self is so important, that the claims of others are ignored or outraged. The haughty spirit will tread the interests of families, communities, and nations in the dust, in order to aggrandize self.

Thirdly: By *irreligion*. The "scorner" has no reverence either for virtue, truth, or God. Such is the infamous name that we have here—a name abhorrent to God and man. There are certain names in law, which if you apply to men will render you liable to an action for libel; but here are names worse than any of them, which civil law does not touch. Tell me that a man is "proud" and "haughty," and scorning, and you will tell me that he is allied to the infernal, and that he is a child of the devil.

Pharaoh, Sennacherib, and Haman are amongst the men that stand forth in history as the representatives of this infamous name. Here is

II. AN INFAMOUS CONDUCT. "Dealeth in proud wrath." This is the conduct of the man who deserves the infamous name. He is not only angry. Most men are angry at times. And there is a righteous anger; but he "dealeth" in wrath—"proud wrath." Insolent and haughty indignation. He *dealeth* in it. His wrath does not come up occasionally as a gust of wind and then pass away, but he deals in it, it is his trade. Malignity is his inspiration, it gratifies him to inflict suffering, the groans of anguish are music to his ears. There have ever been monsters of this class. The Neros and the Julians of history. Malice, it has been said, is the

devil's picture. Lust makes a man brutish, malice makes him devilish. Malice is mental murder: you may kill a man and never touch him.

CONCLUSION. Let us studiously, earnestly, and prayerfully eschew the evils that make up the infamous character in the text. Let us cultivate humility, that low, sweet root from which all heavenly virtues shoot. "Humility," says Sir Thomas Moore, "to superiors is duty to equals; courtesy to inferiors, nobleness, and to all it is safety." It is safety, because it always keeps the soul at anchor, however high the seas or boisterous the winds.

#### SLOTH.

"The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. He coveth greedily all the day long; but the righteous giveth, and spareth not."—Prov. xxi. 25, 26.

SOLOMON here strikes another blow at sloth. It is one of his Apollyon's. We have found him battling with it many times before. Here he deals out to it another strike as he passes on. He seems to attach to it here several evils, suicide, greed and unrighteousness.

I. SUICIDE. "The desire in the slothful killeth him." The man who is too lazy to move his limbs, or open his eyes, is not too lazy to have a "desire." Within the bosom of his lazy carcase he hatches swarms of desires, he covets social prestige, mental furniture, perhaps moral goodness; but he is too indolent to make the necessary efforts to gain them. "His hands refuse to labour." These desires *kill him*. There are

several things that tend to kill such a man.

First: *Ennui*. This is what Byron calls "that awful yawn which sleep cannot abate." In all life there is not a more crushing power than lassitude. It breeds those morbid moods that explain half the diseases of the rich and would-be gentry, "the lounging class."

Secondly: *Disappointment*. There is the desire for what is considered a good, some little effort perhaps is made, but the effort is insufficient, and it succeeds not, and then comes disappointment, and disappointment kills.

Thirdly: *Envy*. The slothful sees others succeed, coming in possession, and enjoying the very blessings he desired; this brings with it that envy which Solomon says is the "rotteness of the bones." The poet says, "O, envy, hide thy bosom, hide it deep: A thousand snakes, with black envenomed mouths, Nest there, and hiss, and feed through all thy heart."

Fourthly: *Poverty*. How much of that pauperism, which slays its thousands in England every year, is brought on through slothfulness! Sloth fills our workhouses with paupers, our prisons with criminals, our army with recruits.

Fifthly: *Remorse*. When the good desired is virtuous in its character, its non-possession fills the slothful with self-accusation and remorse, for he knows that he might have had it had he worked. How true it is, then, that "the desire of the slothful killeth him: for his hands refuse to labour." Another evil is—

II. *Greed*. "He coveteth greedily all the day long." He

sees others in the possession and enjoyment of what he wants. He longs after the same, but he will do nothing to obtain it. He sets his heart on all he sees, and pines away in that "envy which is the rotteness of the bones." In the Paris French translation the words stands thus—"All the day long he does nothing but wish." How very expressive at once of the unconquerable indolence and the fretful, envious, pining unhappiness of the sluggard! And in his wishing he may at times, by the power of a sanguine imagination, work himself into hope. And then, disappointment only embitters the cup of his own mingling—aggravates the misery, which he is painfully conscious is self-inflicted. The slothful are generally greedy, and covetousness lies at the root of all crime; it is against the Decalogue of Jehovah, the gospel of Jesus, and the moral order of the universe. Paul classes it amongst the damnabilities of the moral world.

III. *UNRIGHTEOUSNESS*. "But the righteous giveth and spareth not." This implies that the slothful are neither righteous or generous. The "righteous" are industrious. But the slothful are the reverse. An indolent man is living the life of practical injustice; he consumes the product of other men's labours, he takes from the common stock and adds nothing to it. The idler, whether in the higher or in the lower ranks of society, is a social felon, and should be dealt with accordingly. Because he is slothful he has neither the heart or the power to give—not like the

righteous, who "giveth and spareth not." Diligence not only brings power to give, but often the disposition to do so.

**CONCLUSION.** Avoid sloth, cultivate habits of industry: diligence is at once the condition of getting and of enjoying good. He who knows not what it is to labour, knows not what it is to enjoy. "Recreation is only valuable as it unbends us; the idle know nothing of it." "It is only by labour," says Ruskin, "that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity." Avoid sloth as you would a fiend.

"See the issue of your sloth :  
Of sloth comes pleasure, of pleasure comes riot,  
Of riot comes disease, of disease comes spending,  
Of spending comes want, of want comes theft,  
And of theft comes hanging."

BEN JONSON.

#### WICKEDNESS.

"The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?"—Prov. xxi. 27.

THE first clause of this verse is a repetition of Prov. xv. 8, and has occupied our attention in a previous sketch. On this occasion we shall offer two remarks, and they are contained in the passage.

I. That the **BEST** services of the wicked are always an "abomination" to the Lord. Sacrifices are the highest services that men can render. They are always of two kinds—offerings to God as an expression of love and homage, and offerings to man, as expressions of good will and compassion. There are

no higher services than these for man, it is ever "more blessed to give than to receive." The highest happiness of all intelligent creatures consists in giving—giving to God and to His creation.

The "wicked" engage sometimes in this high service. They "sacrifice." They offer prayers, they sing hymns, they subscribe to religious institutions, and sometimes give gifts to men; but these services in them in all cases is an "abomination" to the Lord. It is an "abomination"—why? Because the *amount* offered has not been large enough, or because it has not been presented in those forms which the laws of religion and benevolence prescribe and sanction? No. But because the *heart is wrong*. God abhors the sacrifice where the heart is not found. The wicked man is one who keeps his heart from God, and he who keeps his heart from God, though he gave his all beside, though he gave his body to be burned, his offerings would be an "abomination."

II. The abomination of the best services of the wicked is **SOMETIMES INCREASED**. "How much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" "The mind," says Bridges, "under the dominant power of sin, is like a pestilential atmosphere, which infests all within its sphere of influence. Such was it when Balaam brought his sacrifice, that he might curse Israel; Saul, in wayward disobedience; the adulteress, as a lulling to her unwary prey; the Pharisees, as a handle to their covetousness; Antinomian professors, for the indulgence of

their lusts ! What an abomination must their service be before Him, who is 'of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity ! ' "

"There are degrees in sin," says a modern writer. "There are aggravating circumstances in the same kinds of sin. There is wickedness in all hypocrisy—in all religious dissimulation,—there being no one thing in which 'Simplicity and godly sincerity' are more imperatively required than the services of religion ; but of all religious dissimulation, that must be the most heinous in which an act of worship is performed expressly to cover and facilitate the execution of an act of villainy: when a worshipper bows before the God of mercy and truth, with the assassin's dagger under his garment, or confesses and prays to 'the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness,' to preclude suspicion—to inspire confidence in his holy character, that he may the more easily succeed in pillaging the poor ! "

**CONCLUSION.** How much, in the churches of Christendom, that which passes for worship every Sunday, is an "abomination ? " How much ? All that is not sincere.

"Oft beneath  
The saintly veil, the votary of sin  
May lurk unseen, and to that eye alone  
Which penetrates the inmost heart, re-  
vealed." BALLY.

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#### MORAL QUALITIES AND THEIR RESULTS.

"A false witness shall perish : but the man that heareth speaketh constantly. A wicked man hardeneth his face : but as for the upright, he directeth his way."—*Prov. xxi. 28, 29.*

In these two verses we discover four moral qualities, and

an intimation of their issues—falsehood and ruin, veracity and safety, wickedness and effrontery, righteousness and self-control.

**I. FALSEHOOD AND RUIN.** "A false witness shall perish." In the margin for "false witness" we have a "witness of lies." There are witnesses of lies in various departments of life. (1.) *In courts of justice.* How many there are, who in the witness-box, are constantly found giving in evidence inventions of their own, stating what they know to have no foundation in fact. (2.) *In social circles.* There are those who are so accustomed to falsehood that their conversation is mythological. They coin falsehoods and put them into circulation. (3.) *In literary paths.* How many things that are recorded every day, in the journalism of England, as facts, that are utterly unfounded. There are scribblers that live by falsehood. How much of the authorship of the present day consists of fabrication ? The most popular writers are the greatest liars, the books that have the largest circulation are fiction. (4.) *The religious teaching.* What errors stream from the pulpits of Christendom ; things are propounded as Divine doctrine that contradict eternal fact, insult the human intellect, and calumniate the Infinitely Good.

But "false witnesses" of all descriptions "shall perish," Their reputation "shall perish," their influence "shall perish," their peace of mind "shall perish."

**II. VERACITY AND SAFETY.** "But the man that heareth constantly." "The man that

heareth" stands opposed to the "false witness." He does not speak from his own deceitful imaginations, but from well-authenticated testimony. He is the man that "*heareth.*" He does not speak until he has well tested the matter. Tested it by the laws of probability, and the laws of reason. He is a truthful man. His veracity is scrupulous and religious. What is the result of his conduct? He "speaketh constantly." The meaning is, that he sustains his statements; cross question him as you may, you can elicit no incoherence, no contradiction. Moses Stuart thinks that the meaning of the expression is—"That the sincere listener to the Divine commands will ever be at liberty to speak and find confidence put in what he says." The man of truth stands constant to his position. Moral realities are immutable, and a true man is true to them.

**III. WICKEDNESS AND EF-FRONTERY.** "A wicked man." This man we have often described. We have only to do here with the result of his conduct. He "hardeneth his face." He has good cause to be ashamed—blushes blood-red should suffice his face. But he gets impudent, granite hearted and brazen faced. "Sometimes the wicked man, bent upon his way, hardens his face against the most distinct warning and intimations of the will of God. Nothing would hinder Balaam from his own 'perverse way.' He even anticipated the conditional per-

mission of God, lest it should ultimately stand in his way. Ahab determinately hardened his face against the clear forbidding will of God. Jehoiakim, before his whole council, set God at defiance. His people ran with the bravery of madmen, 'upon the thick bosses of his buckler.' And does not sin stand out before us with a brazen face? (Isa. iii. 9.) The drunkard reels at noonday. The swearer pours out his wickedness in the open crowd. The sensualist glories in his shame." (Phil. iii. 19.)

**IV. UPRIGHTNESS AND SELF-CONTROL.** The upright man stands opposed to the wicked man, and he "directeth," or, as it is in the margin, considereth "his way." He does not harden his face, and go recklessly forward. But he considers his way—takes heed to his steps. He endeavours to ascertain what the path of duty is, and resolves that his feet shall never swerve therefrom. He would rather be innocent, and be thought guilty, than be guilty and thought innocent.

**CONCLUSION.**—Mark well the evils to avoid—falsehood, wickedness; these lead to ruin and to reckless daring. Mark well the excellencies to imitate—veracity and uprightness; in these are safety and self-control. Heaven and hell are both in the qualities of soul we cultivate. Blessed be this state, damned be that! "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven or hell." (Milton.)

## The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

### SIMILES FROM A PREACHER'S NOTE-BOOK.

*Conflict before Victory.*—Conflict comes before victory, darkness before day ; and the gloomiest sorrows before the hour of triumph.

*Life and Death.*—The city of life can only be entered through the gates of death.

*Disappointments.*—Most of our disappointments are like water thrown on a plate of polished steel ; the greater part of it runs off ; only a little remains, a few drops, but it is enough to destroy its brilliancy.

*The Christian Race.*—How great is the difference between the competitors in the ancient games, and those who strive for victory in the Christian life ! There, only a few, at most, could obtain the wreath of triumph, the two or three who first reached the goal ; here every one that runs until the end, though with never so faltering footsteps, shall receive from the Master's hand the crown of life.

*The Only Mediator.*—We need to go to the Saviour without the intervention of a mediator. It was the father of the prodigal who gave his repentant son the embrace of welcome, and not one of his servants ; although no doubt when he was reconciled, the latter attended to his wants, and saw that necessities were supplied him.

*Beauty and Truth.*—Many constantly seek beauty, but never care for truth ; as though

one only sought flowers, but never troubled to have the fruits of which they are the forerunners. Yet both flowers and fruits have their uses.

*On Going to Christ.*—“I will go to Christ,” says one, “although I am such a sinner.” Wilt thou ? No doubt, in His infinite compassion, He will receive thee. Say in like manner, “I will go to the physician, although I am such a sufferer.” Go to the Saviour, because thou needest Him, and thou wilt find that He can heal thee.

*Desolation and Horror.*—It is desolate to look upon a parching desert without palm-tree, oasis, or fountain, where there is nothing to be seen except sandy wastes and burning sky ; but it is dreadful to gaze upon a battle plain, where the dead lie rotting, and the pestilence seems brooding under the scorching haze : are not there some lives like the desert, simply barren, whilst others, like the battle field, are horrible from their accumulation of evil ?

*Possibilities.*—“How insignificant is man,” says the moralist, “even at his best estate : of scarcely greater value than the pebble that lies upon the sea shore.” But the moralist is wrong. The child may develop into the hero who shall defend the liberties of his country, the poet who shall gladden the world with song, the philosopher who shall discover the laws of nature and the order of

the universe ; or, rising still higher, he may learn to worship, and being recreated in the image of God, reflect the splendour of the Divine Presence. But the pebble will remain a pebble for ever, and can never be developed into the mountain or the island.

*Flowers.*—Our choicest fruits spring from trees that bear the most insignificant blossoms, and our fairest flowers often leave nothing behind them but a useless berry : in the same way we frequently find that the greatest professions result in nothing, whilst where there was the least promise we obtain a life of usefulness.

*Admiration and Love.*—A certain wise man had two sons. One admired him and acknowledged his greatness ; the other loved him, and would have died to save his life : which was the better son ?

*Outward Devotion.*—If a tree be dying, we cannot save its life by fastening leaves, flowers, or fruit to its branches. These might make it look better for a time, but they would not restore its vitality. Yet how often do we act towards ourselves in this manner ! We feel our spiritual

life ebbing away, and in order to hide its decay, we perform a number of acts of external devotion.

*The Two Trees.*—When we see two plants of the same species springing from the same soil, one of which produces good fruit and the other wild fruit—one, it may be, sweet apples, and the other bitter crabs—we ask ourselves, What has made the difference ! Now, if we look more closely at the trees we shall see that one has been grafted, whilst the other is in its natural state.

*Against the Stream.*—An ancient poet tells us that one who rows against the stream, if he relax his efforts, will be carried further back in one hour than he has advanced during many hours. As those who strive for the higher life we find that this is true : not to advance in spite of the current, is to be swept downward by the force of the stream.

*Sin's Brightness.*—Sin deceives by dazzling the spiritual vision. Turn away from the fascination for a moment, consider the consequences, and you will not be likely to transgress.

HUBERT BOWER.





# A HOMILY

ON

## *Soul Merchandise.*

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### EMBLEMS OF SOUL WORK.

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"Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."—Matt. xxv. 9.

**M**ATERIAL merchandise is evidently a Divine ordinance. Man has an *instinct* for commerce. He has, to use language we have elsewhere employed, a bartering propensity, as well as a bartering power. Visit the darkest regions of barbaric life, and you will find the wild and savage natives driving some species of trade. They may only exchange feathers, shells, or some petty toys ; still it is commerce. Our missionaries often introduce themselves to heathen scenes, and ingratiate themselves with heathen hearts, by first appealing to this mercantile instinct. Man *needs* commerce. The Almighty has not brought within the sphere of man's nativity all the provisions he requires for his entire well being. He needs other minerals than those which are embosomed in his native mountains ; other fruits than those which are indigenous to his native soil ; other arts than those which can be invented by his own brain ; and other trades than those which can be wrought by his own hand. He needs some-

thing of all that this omniferous earth contains—some product from every zone, and some help from every original genius and every skilful hand. He must, therefore, exchange commodities with the people of all lands, if he is to supply all his ever-multiplying wants as a progressive being.

Nature, too, affords man facilities for this world-wide commerce. The various parts of the world are rendered accessible to each other by rivers, and seas, and oceans; and these seem to wait ever in throbbing earnestness to carry to and fro for our benefit the treasures of every land. This mercantile intercourse, by the principle of inter-dependence, tends to promote goodwill and brotherhood throughout the world; it is the great harmonizing force of the universe, both material and mental. Atom is dependent on atom, mind on mind. The independence of one country of another would be an anomaly in the creation. As a doctrine, it is but political cant for monopolising ends. Let the principle of inter-dependence break itself away from the chains of narrow Governments, and be set free to work amongst the peoples of the world—let every protective bolt on the door of universal commerce be for ever removed, and the world's market thrown open to every trader, and very soon nations will have but little use for those armies and navies which now depress their energies and destroy their wealth.

From all these considerations I infer that commerce is a divine ordinance. I need not quote Scripture in support of this conclusion: it is implied in almost every chapter which bears on the practical conduct of men. As a divine ordinance, it is no necessary obstruction to the spiritual progress of man; but otherwise. It is, to use a popular sentence, one of the best "means of grace." What a *school* is the market for the study of human nature! How the tendencies and idiosyncrasies of mind come out under the influence of trade! You can read far more interesting and practical chapters on man, as he appears in com-

mercial attitudes, than you can find in any book on mental science. What a *gymnasium* is the market for the exercise of virtuous principles! The religious life, like every other, requires exercise to get strength and manly tone. Principles, like trees, need the open air, winds, and storms, to strengthen their fibres, and to deepen their roots. What an *arena* is the market for valorous achievements! In no other scene has a good man such an opportunity for doing open and honourable battle with avarice, falsehood, dishonesty, and craft. He who conquers these is the true hero: he fights the good fight of faith, and wins the crown of life. What a *medium* is the market for the diffusion of true principles? The exchange of material commodities is ever associated, as the Creator undoubtedly designed it should be, with a higher exchange—the exchange of thought, feeling, mind. The commerce of soul is by far the highest aspect, and most important end of all other commerce. In the markets of the world mind flows and re-flows into mind, and the thoughts of nations mingle together. The British market is the heart of the civilized world: give it a healthy and a holy pulsation, and its salutary influence shall be felt afar. Perish, then, the idea that commercial pursuits are necessary obstructions to true progress! Depraved man generally makes them so, because he perverts every divine institution; but they are divinely designed and fitted for his highest spiritual good.

I refer to this material merchandise in order to illustrate a merchandise of a higher order—the merchandise of souls. The true work of the soul, the high moral work which God demands from it, is very frequently represented in the Bible under the figure of merchandise. Thus in Proverbs we are commanded “to buy the truth, and sell it not,” and in Isaiah we are commanded “to buy wine and milk without money or price.” In the parable of our Saviour the kingdom of heaven is represented “as a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found

one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." And in the book of Revelations Christ, addressing the Laodicean Church, says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." My purpose now is to mention some of the *distinguishing* facts in the *genuine* merchandise of souls.

I. It is prosecuted in quest of the highest good. What is the highest good? In one word, godliness—knowledge of God, assimilation to God, fellowship with God; this is the *highest* good of man. It is represented in the Bible in a variety of forms. It is called truth—"buy the truth." Truth is the reality of life—reality in our conceptions, loves, pursuits, and pleasures. The true man is the man whose life realizes the Divine ideal of manhood. It is represented as "wisdom," the merchandise of which "is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold, and more precious than rubies." It is denominated the "pearl of great price," a pearl of such incomparable worth as to justify a man in selling all that he has in order to procure it. And it is further represented as the very meat, drink, and clothing of the soul. No language is too strong, no figure too bold, to set forth the priceless worth of genuine spiritual excellence. It is the only *true* wealth. Material possessions do not enrich the man; they are outside of him, and from them he must pass one day; but goodness makes opulent the man himself. Nor is there any true enjoyment without it. Material pleasures are all on the surface of the soul; they lose their sweetness as the senses get numbed by years, and the frame decays. But goodness is a fountain of joy springing from the deepest deeps, and for ever welling up within. And as to true dignity, there is none apart from this. Worldly dignities are theatrical; like the spangled robes of actors, they are put on one hour

to be thrown by the next. They sparkle only in the false lights of life. But goodness is a crown of glory that fadeth not away. All genuine merchandise of souls, then, is prosecuted in quest of this spiritual excellence.

We notice another distinguishing fact in the genuine merchandise of souls.

II. Its success requires a COMPLIANCE WITH UNALTERABLE CONDITIONS. In secular commerce success does not always depend upon a compliance with the same terms. The race is not always to the swift, nor is the battle always to the strong. Some in the market get rich by setting at defiance the laws which determine the success of others. Fortunes are often made by a concurrence of auspicious circumstances, and sometimes by what are called "lucky hits." It is not so in the genuine merchandise of souls. There are settled and immutable conditions, a compliance with which is essential in order to get the inestimable treasure. What are the conditions? I mention two.

First: *Application to Christ.* In secular commerce men to succeed are not necessarily restricted in their dealings to any particular man or any class of men, nor to any particular market. They may often find it more lucrative to trade with men of other tribes and on other shores than with their countrymen at home. Not so with soul merchandise. There is One Being to whom *all* must come for the good sought after. Who is He? "I counsel thee to buy of *Me* gold purified in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Jesus of Nazareth is the *only* Disposer of it. It is to be found no where else. The deepest depth of human intelligence says "it is not in me." The vast sea of human thought the world over saith "it is not in me." It is not to be found in the land of the living.

Secondly: *Surrender of self.* A young lawyer once came to Christ in search of the chief good. Under what terms

did He offer it to him? What price did he require for it? Not money, the chief good is to be obtained "without money or price." But the sacrifice of *self*. "Go and sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven." Abandon all that thou holdest most dear and thou shalt get from Me the good for which thy nature was made, for which it craves, and without which it is lost. Here is the condition—"If any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me." This is the price. Your prejudices, your carnal gratifications, your self-seeking, your darling sins, must be renounced, and then, and not till then, you will receive from the hands of Christ that which will fill you with the joys and ennable you with the dignities of eternity.

We notice another distinguishing fact in the merchandise of souls.

III. It is in all cases CARRIED ON WITH BORROWED CAPITAL. What is the capital required in the merchandise of souls? The faculty to discover goodness, the heart to appreciate goodness, the will to choose goodness, the nature to appropriate goodness. These are the great talents—no higher in the universe ;—we have them. Christ has entrusted them to us as His stewards. Though some have them in a higher measure than others, all have them, and all are responsible to the Great Proprietor not only for their existence, but for the use that is made of them. As the man who borrows money is as responsible to the creditor for the interest as for the principal, so are we as responsible to God for the use we make of the powers as of the powers themselves. The man of one talent is as bound to employ his one aright as the man of five is bound to employ his five. All the souls that appear on the stage of life, the Great Master, to use a mercantile expression, puts into business. He entrusts them with the necessary capital, He sets before them the object they should pursue, enjoins on them the laws that should

regulate them in all their exchanges and labours, and fixes a day when He shall call them to account and reward them according to their works. On that day the unfaithful trader will be banished for ever from His Presence, whilst the faithful shall be welcomed to an everlasting participation of the inestimable blessedness of His Own Being.

In this spiritual merchandise, then, all work with *borrowed* capital. This is one of its distinguishing facts. In secular merchandise men do not always conduct their business with borrowed capital, though perhaps some of the most successful merchants have often done so. In all probability the history of commerce would show that the men who started in business with the smallest means, have as a rule been more successful than those who commenced with ample resources. The reason is obvious ; the man with the smallest means has the strongest motives for the exercise of sagacity, economy, and diligence ; and these are the best guarantees of success. Spiritually, let us use our borrowed powers diligently and faithfully, and then, though they may be inferior both in kind and measure to those of others, we shall have the reward of faithful servants.

We notice another distinguishing fact in the genuine merchandise of souls.

IV. It is advantageous to all in PROPORTION TO THE SUCCESS OF EACH. In material merchandise the more some prosper in their accumulations of wealth, the less chance for others. Material wealth is necessarily limited, and, therefore, the more one gets, the less remains for others. Because in this country the upper "ten thousand" have appropriated so much to their own personal use, the middle-classes have to struggle hard after a competency, whilst the millions of the lower orders are in a starving condition. The time is approaching when Government must interfere, and set a limit, beyond which no man's income should go. Monopoly implies social injustice. In the genuine merchandise of

souls, however, the case is different ; the more spiritual intelligence, practical wisdom, Divine virtues, any man gets, the better not only for himself, but for others, too. The good man, however secularly poor, has the power of making others rich—rich with the “unsearchable riches of Christ.” Man could sooner monopolise the air and the light, than goodness; sooner monopolise the sun, than God. Goodness not only reveals goodness, but reflects it. Each man that attains spiritual excellence, becomes a fresh fountain in the desert to increase and heighten the world’s spiritual life—a fresh star to diminish the world’s spiritual darkness, and to brighten the hemisphere of souls. In spiritual merchandise, therefore, there need be none of the envious competition that marks and curses the secular markets of the world.

We notice another distinguishing fact in the genuine merchandise of souls.

V. It is an ETERNAL BUYING AND NEVER SELLING. In material merchandise there is “buying and selling in order to get gain.” Each merchant is in turn a buyer and a seller. He buys to sell and sells to buy. It is not so in spiritual merchandise: it is buying ever. The soul will ever be increasing its spiritual acquisitions. The more it has, the more it will crave, and the more capacity it gets for attaining. There will ever be deeper mines to explore, wider fields to roam, and higher heights to scale. John the beloved disciple said, when on earth, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be.” Though ages have departed since he left the world, and he has been ever since advancing in spiritual attainments, could he speak to us to-night he would utter the same words. Holy souls are always passing “from glory to glory.” But whilst ever buying, there is *no selling*. Giving, freely and generously, indeed, always, but *no selling*—no bartering principles away for lucre, no selling of truth for gain. “Buy the truth, and *sell it not*.” It must not be sold for anything. There is nothing equal to

its value. Put worlds in a balance against it, and they will prove lighter than a feather. Sell it not. Not for palaces, not for empires, not for life itself. "Forsake her not, and she shall *preserve* thee: love her, and she shall *keep* thee;" guard thee from the carnal, and the selfish, and the devilish. Truth is the soul's true palladium. "She shall *promote* thee." She will raise thee in the estimation of thine own conscience—in the judgment of the whole universe, and in the eye of God. "She shall give to thy head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. The crown she gives is made not of fading laurels, or of mouldering gems—a tawdry adornment for a head of clay, but a crown coruscating with the moral perfections of the Great God Himself.

CONCLUSION.—Are you engaged in this genuine spiritual merchandise? Are you trading in quest of the chief good—the heavenly wisdom? If not, why? "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool, seeing he hath no heart to it?" God has given you a price in your hand to buy it. He has given you leisure, books, society, the Gospel, the ministry, intellectual and moral faculties, for the purpose of getting it. Why have you not got it when the price is in your hand? Are you employing the "price" He has given you to buy wisdom, in purchasing the worthless toys of earth? "Wherefore spend ye your money for that which is not bread, and for that which satisfieth not?" Awake to a sense of your obligation. Be about your "Father's business." Having heard of the pearl of great price, sell all that thou hast to procure it.

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#### CIVILISING INFLUENCE OF COMMERCE.

"COMMERCE tends to wear off those prejudices which maintain distinction and animosity between nations. It softens and polishes the manners of men. It unites them by one of the strongest of all ties—the desire of supplying their mutual wants. It disposes them to peace, by establishing in every state an order of citizens bound by their interest to be the guardians of public tranquillity. As soon as the commercial spirit acquires vigour, and begins to gain an ascendant in any society, we discern a new genius in its policy, its alliances, its wars, and its negotiations."—ROBERTSON.

## Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

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**Subject: GOD'S MUNDANE PROPERTY AND MAN'S MORAL OBLIGATION.**

“The earth is the Lord’s,  
And the fulness thereof ;  
The world, and they that dwell therein.  
For He hath founded it upon the seas,  
And established it upon the floods.”—Psa. xxiv. 1, 2.

**HISTORY.**—This Psalm is entitled the Psalm of David, and there is no reason to believe that he was not the author. The removal of the ark from the house of Obed Edom to Mount Zion as described in 2 Sam. vi., 1 Chron. xv., was in all probability the occasion of its composition. The musical performances that attended this stirring event appear to have been arranged with the utmost skill and care, and had doubtless their part in creating that luxuriance of emotion which the king displayed. We know, from various parts of Scripture, that King David devoted immense pains to the due celebration of the musical service of the sanctuary. Hundreds and thousands of the Levites were trained most carefully as players on instruments, and as singers. From the narrative in First Chronicles we learn that on the occasion of bringing up the ark, the singers and players were most carefully arranged, according to the instrument they played on, or the part they sang. It has been supposed by some that the 24th Psalm was sung on this occasion, and that it was sung in parts. One body of singers, as the procession nears the city, proclaim the glory of God :—

*The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof ;  
The world, and they that dwell therein.*

Another body of singers echo the announcement :—

*For He hath founded it upon the seas,  
And established it upon the floods.*

Again, by the first body of singers, the question is asked :—

*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord,  
Or who shall stand in his holy place ?*

To this it is replied :—

*He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart,  
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*

Still another body, perhaps, join their testimony :—

*He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,  
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

Then altogether, perhaps, combining :—

*This is the generation of them that seek him,  
That seek thy face, O Jacob!*

The strain is now probably taken up by the musical instruments until the gates of Mount Zion are reached, when the first body of singers, gazing up to the lofty battlements, thus addresses them :—

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of Glory shall come in.*

A party from within the gates ask ?

*Who is this King of Glory ?*

From around the sacred ark the reply is wafted majestically :—

*The Lord, strong and mighty,  
The Lord, mighty in battle !*

Immediately the gate is thrown open. . Then, perhaps, the procession reaches an inner one, where the same challenge is given, the same question asked, and an answer even more sublime returned :

*The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory.*

Amid this glorious wave of song and praise the ark is placed in the tabernacle, which the king had caused to be prepared for it. “ How others may think upon this point,” says Dr. Delaney, “ I cannot say, nor pretend to describe; but for my own part I have no notion of hearing, or of any man’s ever having seen or heard anything so great, so solemn, so celestial on this side the gates of heaven.”

ANNOTATIONS.—*Ver. 1.*—“ *The earth is the Lord’s.*” To Jehovah the earth belongs. “ The object of the beginning of the Psalm is to show that the Jews had nothing in themselves that could entitle them to approach nearer or more familiarly to God than the Gentiles.”—*Calvin.* “ *And the fulness thereof.*” All that it contains—minerals, vegetables, animals, intelligences. “ *The world and they that dwell therein.*” “ The word translated *world* is a poetical equivalent to *earth*, denoting specially, according to its etymology, the productive portion of the earth, and thus corresponding indirectly to the Greek *oἰχονμένη*, or inhabited earth.”—*Alexander.*

*Ver. 2.*—“ *For he hath founded it upon the seas.*” To the Hebrew the earth was a plane, surrounded by the ocean stream. Water was everywhere beneath the earth, as rivers and springs showed. The mountains were the pillars that held it in its place. “ *And established it upon the floods.*” Holdeth it fast upon the floods. Why do not the waters that surge around it, swell within its bosom, and roll over its surface, engulf and destroy it? Here is the reason, “ *He it established upon the floods.*” He holds it fast ; He gives it a firm anchorage amidst the surging waters.

**ARGUMENT.**—The whole Psalm contains three subjects. (1.) God's mundane property and man's moral obligation. (2.) The soul's cry and the true response. (3.) Jehovah's demand and man's inquiry. But we can only in this article reflect upon the first which is contained in the first two verses.

**HOMILETICS.**—These two verses may be looked upon homiletically in two aspects, as presenting the mundane property of God and suggesting the moral obligation of man.

**I. THE MUNDANE PROPERTY OF GOD.**—The text leads us to consider two things concerning God's mundane possessions.

First : *Their extent.* (1.) "The earth." That is the whole teraqueous globe. All the acres are His, all the seas and rivers, all the mountains and valleys are His. (2.) "And the fulness thereof." The gold and the silver, the pearls and the diamonds, all the plants and the flowers and trees embedded in the soil, all the tribes of life that teem in the ocean, that crawl in the dust, that roam in the fields, that crowd the air—all are His. The fulness thereof. How full is the earth ! the germs of numbered generations of plants, and animals, and men still slumber in its bosom. More will come of it than has yet appeared. (3.) "The world and they that dwell therein." Perhaps men are specially referred to here. All souls are His. The soul of the father and the son are His. These are large possessions, but what are they to His immeasurable estates. The Great Universe is His with its ten thousand systems. The earth and its fulness to the whole creation are less than an atom to the Andes, less than a dewdrop to the ocean, "Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's."

Secondly : *Their foundation.*—On what ground does He claim all that ? Creatorship. He owns the globe because He *made it.* "He hath founded it upon the sea and established it upon the floods." The property which we regard ourselves as having the strongest claim to is the produce of our own skill and energy. That which would never have been had I not worked for, is mine in the highest sense in which a creature can hold property. But our productions are not *creations.* They are but combinations of elements and forces that exist independent of us. What God claims He has *created.* "All things were created by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."

II. THE MORAL OBLIGATION OF MAN. God's mundane possessions powerfully urge on man several obligations.

First : *It urges him to be just.* "Will a man rob God?" Yet the men who use the earth and its productions and their own talents as if they were their own are in spirit robbing God. You have nothing that you can justly call your own. Even your existence belongs to another. Justice requires you practically to recognize that you are *trustees*, not owners.

Secondly : *It urges him to be humble.* What are the largest land-owners on the face of the earth to Him! In what sense are the acres they call their own theirs? They are only tenants at will, liable to ejectment at any moment. Their lands were held by others only a few years ago, and they may pass into other hands on the morrow. "The earth is the Lord's," not theirs. And the more of it they have as their mere legal due the more humble they should be before God.

Thirdly : *It urges him to be thankful.* How thankful we ought to be to the Great One that He has allowed us to make use of His earth and its productions! It is His earth that has given us a tabernacle for our souls and that keeps that tabernacle in constant repair. It is He that has given us ourselves with all our capacities of improvement and pleasure. How thankful should we be. "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me bless and praise His Holy Name."

Fourthly : *It urges him to be acquiescent.* Fall in with God's methods in disposing of His property. He has a right to do what He likes with His own. If He chose to shake the earth with thunder, to rive it with volcanoes, or to deluge it with oceans, who are we that we should complain? And if He should choose to strip us of our enjoyments, reduce us to suffering, and cut short our days, has He not a right to do so? The language of Job should be ours. "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord."

CONCLUSION.—Let the text be written on our hearts. It is engraved on the front of the Royal Exchange in London, but how few of the busy crowds that pass that edifice pause even to read it, and fewer still to ponder it in their hearts. The busy traders labour and accumulate as if the earth was theirs. "The

• earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," therefore be *just*, be *humble*, be *thankful*, and be *acquiescent*.

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THE PROBABLE END OF THE EARTH.

" Is it not probable, it may be asked, that the time will come when the globe itself will come to an end ! And if it be so, can science detect the provision that is possibly made for this consummation of all things ? We have seen that the atmosphere has for long been undergoing a change ; that at a very early period it was charged with carbonic acid, the carbon of which now forms part of animal and vegetable structures. We saw, also, that at first it contained no ammonia ; but since vegetation and decomposition began, the nitrogen that existed in the nitrates of the earth, and some of the nitrogen of the atmosphere have been gradually entering into new combinations, and forming ammonia ; and the quantity of ammonia, a substance at first non-existent, has gradually increased, and as it is volatile, the atmosphere now always contains some of it. The quantity has now become so great in it, that it can always be detected by chemical analysis. There is an evident tendency of it to increase in the atmosphere. Now supposing it to go on increasing up to a certain point, it forms with air a mixture that, upon the application of fire, is violently explosive. An atmosphere charged with ammonia is liable to explode whenever a flash of lightning passes through it. And such an explosion would doubtless destroy perhaps without leaving traces of the present order of things."—DR. LUDLEY KEMP.



## A Homiletic Glance at the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

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*Subject: IDEAL MARRIAGE.*

" Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church ; and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it ; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies ; he that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church ; for we are members of the body, of his flesh, and

of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."—Ephes. v. 22—33.

**ANNOTATIONS.**—*Ver. 22.*—“*Wives, submit yourselves.*” Ye wives unto your own husbands. “So the oldest MSS., and by the testimony of Jerome, the Greek MSS. in his time. The other MSS. fill up in different ways; a sure sign that the shorter reading is the genuine one.”—Alford. Submission, however, is implied, and is expressed in Verse 24. Submission is, indeed, the duty which the Apostle enjoins from verse 21st of this chapter to the 9th of the following one. The Apostle instances three classes of persons under subjection, and these in order of inferiority—wives, children, servants, and stating after each the duties of the classes to which they are respectively under subjection—husbands, fathers, masters; and the whole of the passage which we have selected for consideration refers to subjection in the first class; namely, of wives to their husbands. “*Your own husbands,*”—τοῖς ἴδιοις ἀνδράσιν—in contradistinction to those of others. “*As unto the Lord.*” This does not mean that the duty is to be rendered to a husband as to a Lord, but as to Christ, who is the Lord and Master of all. Obedience to the husband is to be rendered out of love and loyalty to Christ.

*Ver. 23.*—“*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church.*” The Apostle adopts from the Old Testament the image of marriage so frequently employed to represent the relation between God and His people. (Psa. xlv.; Isaiah liv.; Jeremiah iii. 11.) Christ is the head of the church, the guiding and controlling spirit of His people, and so is the husband. “*He is the Saviour of the body.*” “He himself is the Saviour of the body.”—Ellicott. Why the Apostle added these words it is not easy to determine. Two reasons have been suggested; one is in order to mark the difference between the cases otherwise so agreeing, as if the Apostle had said, the husband is like Christ the head, but he is not like Christ the Saviour: the other reason is, that it is introduced in order to express the idea that the rulership of the husband should be like that of Christ—a rulership to bless and to save.

*Ver. 24.*—“*Therefore as the Church is subject, unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*” “Therefore,” ἀλλα, “nevertheless.” There is no reason why our translators should have given ἀλλα a syllogistic force, and render it *therefore*, as though it introduced the conclusion of the preceding argument. “*In every thing.*” This of course must be taken with qualification. It means in every thing that is right and proper.

*Ver. 25.*—“*Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it.*” How did Christ love the Church? It was a spiritual not a carnal affection; it was a disinterested not a selfish affection. His love was pure and self-sacrificing.

Ver. 26.—“*That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*” “That he might sanctify her, cleansing her by the laver of the water in the word.” (Alford.) It is thought that there is an allusion here to the various ablutions in the ancient East of those who were about to be married, especially those in high life. Such cleansing continued in some cases for twelve months. See Esther, ii. 12; Psa. xlv. 13, 14; Ezekiel, xvi. 7—14. “*With the washing of water,*” rather as Greek “with,” or by the *laver* of the water, *viz.* the baptismal water. So it ought to be translated (Titus iii. 5); the only other passage in the New Testament where it occurs. As the bride passed through a purifying bath before marriage, so the Church (Rev. xxi. 2). He speaks of baptism according to its high *ideal* and *design*, as if the inward grace accompanied the outward rite; hence he asserts of outward baptism whatever is involved in a believing appropriation of the divine truths it symbolises, and says that Christ by baptism has purified the Church. (Neander.) “*By the word;*” Greek, “in the word.” The word is the cleansing element, the water is but the symbol. The water may be dispensed with, the word is essential.

Ver. 27.—“*That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.*” “That He might present to Himself the Church in glorious beauty, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and blameless.” (Ellicott.) “Holiness is inward glory. Glory is conspicuous holiness.” “*That he might present.*” This is true in a manner of the present life; comp. Chap. iv. 13. Rather it alludes to his coming, and is the final aim of the giving (ver. 25), and cleansing (ver. 26). *To himself*, as to a husband betrothed. *A glorious Church (the Church glorious).* From the love of Christ we ought to estimate our sanctification. What bride despairs her husband’s bridal offering? Church, Gr. *τινίν*, that *Church* which corresponds to his everlasting conception of it. *Spot*, from every wicked inclination. *Wrinkle*, from old age. *Without blemish.*—C. E. T.

Ver. 28 & 29. “*So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.*” No man, unless, forsooth, he revolt from nature and from himself. *His own flesh.* (Ver. 31, end.) *Nourisheth*—nourishes *it*, inwardly. *Cherisheth it*, outwardly. The same word is found in Deut. xxii. 6; Job. xxxix. 14; 1 Kings i. 2—4. This refers to *clothing*, as *nourishing* to food. *The Church*, nourishes and cherishes. For *κυριός*, the Lord, read *χριστός*, Christ.—C. E. T.

Ver. 30.—“*For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*” There is an allusion here to the language which Adam used respecting Eve. “This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.” The words of course are not to be taken in a literal sense, for our bones and flesh are not parts of Christ’s bones and flesh, but in a spiritual sense it represents the close and intimate union subsisting between Christ and His people.

Ver. 31.—“*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*” This verse is a quotation from Genesis vii. 2. The meaning is, because the relation subsisting between the man and the woman who are truly married, is more intimate than any other; more intimate than subsisting between parents and children. All other relationships are subordinate to it. One flesh, one common life.

Ver. 32.—“*This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.*” The *Vulgate* wrongly translates this, “*This is a great sacrament.*” It is not the ordinary marriage which is here called a mystery, but the union subsisting between Christ and His Church.

Ver. 33.—*Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*” There are in all three kinds of duties which the Law prescribes to the *husband*. (Exodus xxi. 10.) The Apostle has mentioned the two former in a spiritual sense (ver. 29); now the order would lead him to the third, which is summed up in that expression of Hosea (chap. ii. 10), “*Thou shalt know the Lord.*” But the Apostle suddenly breaks off. Minds of the rarest character and capacity are required.—C. E. T.

**HOMILETICS.**—The subject of this passage is “*Ideal Matrimony ; or, God’s Idea of a Marriage State.*” As we look into it, our convictions will deepen that the Divine idea is but very partially, if at all, developed in matrimonial alliances of modern society. What is marriage ?

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## *Germs of Thought.*

### THE FOREIGN PULPIT.

*Subject: THE COMPASSION OF JESUS.*

*(Continued from p. 256.)*

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few : pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”—Matt. ix. 36—38.

**II. OBSERVE THE OCCASION OF HIS COMPASSION.** “And when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep

having no shepherd." Jesus went about from place to place in Galilee. He saw the condition of the people, and what He saw filled Him with sorrowful sympathy. It was not the outward condition of the people that affected Him so painfully. Galilee was prosperous. It was more populous than our country, but the people were well sustained. We may not conclude from what it is what was its former condition. It has now gone to ruin, yet it still bears traces, though only feeble traces, of its former beauty and fruitfulness. If the ample enjoyment of the blessings of life could make a people happy, the Galileans ought to have been happy beneath their vines and their fig trees. But man doth not live by bread alone. Nor were the people free from wants and from the host of evils which follow in the train of sin, and which are the heritage of our race. We often read in the Gospels of their bringing the sick and the afflicted to Jesus that He might heal them; and we see clearly enough with what sorrowful feelings and with what intimate sympathy He devoted Himself to the services of the sick and the afflicted. It was in reference to this deep and intimate sympathy that the Evangelist applied the words of the prophet to Him (Matt. viii. 17), "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." But He was moved by something deeper than this. The spiritual need of the people moved Him more deeply: their religious desolation and moral ruin. They were as sheep having no shepherd. The priests and the scribes, the shepherds of the people, sat in Jerusalem and Judea; rarely did one of them come to Galilee to care for the poor, ignorant people. They were a susceptible people; this is clear from the reception Jesus met with from them, almost all His disciples being Galileans. But they were left to perish; and it was this inner spiritual wretchedness, spread out before His eye, that moved His heart so deeply.

We see from this how we should esteem the condition of a people and our own. We willingly allow ourselves to be deceived by outward appearances, instead of going to the root of things. The chief question is, how a man stands in relation to God. The inner religious life is the proper man. Outwardly his position may be good, his intellectual life may be strong and vigorous—yet he may, nevertheless, be a ruined man, simply because his relation to good is bad; because he has no

spiritual life. It is his relation to God that decides a man's condition, and this alone. This is that which lasts for ever. All else will fall away at death. It is by this we stand or fall.

"When He saw the multitudes He was moved to compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." We do not need to look far to see that this is so still. The Christian should have a heart for all men. The heathen world cannot be better described than in these words, "faint and scattered." They have souls, and are capable of salvation. Rightly considered, it is a strange thing that Christianity does not embrace one-third part of the human family. And verily no informed man will say that the heathen are blessed. "Faint and scattered." Even of the cultured peoples of antiquity, we can only say, "How sad a lot; how unspeakably better off are we than they were!" If we look at their religious and moral life, what a sorrowful picture. Look, moreover, at the heathen world of to-day. But we need not go so far. The so-called Christian world is much as our text describes. How many with immortal souls live without God, religion, or faith; without comfort, or hope, or a Saviour, never having heard of Jesus? How many are there in our great cities living in sin, trained up even from infancy in the ways of the wicked one? And what have we close about us? We are accustomed to speak of the night-side of our social life. We are so accustomed to it that we believe it must needs be. But if we were only once to bring before our souls the numbers of poor creatures who are ruined, body and soul, year by year; children of our people; the baptised of our churches; souls called to eternal salvation—lost for time and eternity; if we were to compute all this, and then to presentiate to ourselves all the sorrow and wretchedness, the trouble of soul surrounding us on all hands, hid beneath the roofs of our houses, or covered with the veil of night; if for once that veil were lifted, and we could see all this wretchedness of body and soul; if it were all suddenly laid bare to our view—I believe we should never be cheerful again while life lasted. And yet we live on, and how few ever inquire into these things, and how little are our hearts affected by them!

But it is not simply where hunger and trouble exist that sorrow has set up her dwelling among men. The deepest sorrow

is sin ; the inner desolation, the estrangement of the soul from God. It is the sorrow which is most real, because it makes men wretched for ever. And this is found where the body is adorned with silks and satins, and the mind with the choicest culture. It is not the wealth, or culture, or knowledge, or toil, or honour that is the man himself. This is the clothing, but it is not the man. He must have clothing ; he ought to work, to acquire, to possess, to attain culture, &c. ; but the man, the man that shall live, is beyond all this. The question is, not what we have, or have attained, but what we are, whether we are God's, or not. It is this alone that decides, and it decides for eternity. One may be rich in possessions, in culture, and yet be inwardly a poor, lost, ruined man. It is vain to attempt to conceal the inner poverty by outward adornments, and to hide our emptiness of soul from ourselves. What avails all these outward things, which must be left behind ? Our knowledge—if we are not wise unto salvation—the flocking of great men about us, when none of them can intercede for us before God, or receive our eternal sentence ? All these may be means of life ; they are not its object. The goal of life is to live in God, and to belong to Him. And who belong to Him ? By nature, none. By destination, all ; but really, only those who have returned to Him out of the “far country.” All we like sheep have gone astray ; but there is One who is the Shepherd of souls, and in His great heart He has felt and borne all the sorrows of humanity ; and He has prepared help for us.

**III. WHAT HELP ?** “The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few ; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.” Labourers—there is the help. Prayer—there is the way to help. If we could do nothing else, at least this we could do, ask, pray for labourers—there is the help ; not in organizations, institutions, &c. It is something personal, for it must spring out of the heart. The compassion which lays to heart human sorrows, and gives itself to personal service—there is the help. But the fountain of help is in the heart of Jesus Christ ; for He has become the revelation of mercy in the world. He has brought it down out of the heart of God into the earth, and has discovered the help universally needed, the deliverance of the soul.

He becomes the helper in His life, especially in His death. When He was lifted up upon the cross, He began to draw all men unto Himself ; and His cross, and the preaching of His cross, have drawn a Church about Him ; and the history of the Church is a history of mercy ; and its vocation is to proclaim the mercy of Jesus Christ, and to gather the lost into the rescuing arms of the Redeemer.

These are not empty words. He is the fountain of help, and of spiritual health, for unless the innermost life of our souls is healed, we have not the help we need. And that which heals is simply the mercy of God in Christ. The old, and yet ever new, history of the heart finds expression in this form :—“Whereas I once took my own way, not knowing that it was the way to destruction, now I have chosen the way of life, and have forgiveness of sins in Him. I have obtained mercy.”

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By R. VAUGHAN PRYCE, M.A., LL.B.

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**Subject: ELISHA AND THE NAUGHTY CHILDREN.**

“And he went up from thence unto Beth-el : and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord : and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.”—2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

THE two characters mentioned in this chapter stand alone in all the range of history sacred and profane. The imagination of novel-writers has been prolific to paint the grand and the marvellous, but we look in vain in all the creations of romance for such noble characters as Elijah the Tishbite and Elisha the son of Saphat. They were bold and persevering in the execution of the work committed to their care ; both of them wrought miracles, both of them were the sworn enemies of idolatry, and a burning zeal for the glory of God inspired them to re-establish the true worship of the Lord of Hosts. Their lives teach :—First : that good men’s friendship is very warm. When Elijah wished his friend to tarry at Gilgal, Elisha said unto him,

“As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.”

As we look upon the ruptures among friends, we are often tempted to exclaim, O friendship, thou art but an empty name! History furnishes us now and then with a Damon and Pythias, still they are very few; however, friendship, when cemented and sanctified by godliness is “strong as death, and many waters cannot quench it.”

“Flowers are lovely ; love is flower-like ;  
 Friendship is a sheltering tree ;  
 O, the joys that come down shower-like,  
 Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty.”

Secondly: *That good men’s friendship is of mutual benefit to them.* It is impossible to hold communion with any individual, either good or bad, without being influenced thereby; hence arises the importance of selecting good companions. The selection of a bad man for a friend has often been the temporal and spiritual ruin of many a soul, whereas, on the other hand, the selection of a good man for a companion has proved the salvation of thousands. Moreover, the mutual benefit of the good is beyond computation. Their conversations, advices, and experiences, have proved a healing balm to each other’s smarting wounds. Such was the friendship of Whitfield and Wesley, Luther and Melancthon, Paul and Luke, Jesus and the beloved disciple. Being so, let us obey the command, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Heb. x. 25.) We notice—

I. THE EVENT AS REGARDS THE TRANSGRESSORS. They were the children of a small town among the hills, in one of the extremities of the land of Canaan, called Bethel; the inhabitants depended chiefly for their living upon their flocks of sheep and the produce of the earth.

First: *Wickedness arising from unexpected quarters.* The children of Bethel. Above all we would expect a better behaviour from them. Why? There Jacob met God as he slept on the stony pillows, when he fled for his life from his exasperated brother. At Bethel he beheld the ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the

angels of God ascended and descended. There also he took the stone that he had for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, saying, "How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." In the neighbourhood of Bethel dwelt Deborah, "a mother in Israel," the prophetess, poet and warrior, whose bravery inspired the courage of her oppressed countrymen, and whose genius immortalized the victory by the waters of Megiddo. The prophet Samuel went to Bethel annually to judge Israel, and surely we might expect better manners from a place that had been favoured by the presence of so many of the excellent of the earth. So it is in every age with individuals, families, and kingdoms.

Secondly : *That there is a great responsibility connected with a family.* Looking at the thing naturally and morally, it is of the greatest importance. Corporeal, mental, and moral diseases are transmitted to posterity, and generations yet unborn shall be tainted by the parents' maladies ; what an awful thought ! Considering the tendencies of our nature to evil, and the bad examples around us, nothing but strong common sense, strong parental love and the fear of God, will enable parents to wash their hands from the blood of their offspring.

"A pebble in the streamlet's track  
Has turned the course of many a river :  
The dewdrop on the baby plant  
Has warped the giant oak forever."

The crime of the children of Bethel is a very prevalent one amongst the youth of every neighbourhood, especially amongst the wild Arabs of the large towns and populous districts. Beware ! There is poetry in the silvery locks, gracefulness in the bended shoulder, eloquence in the stammering of an octogenarian, and nobility in the faltering steps of the patriarch. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God, I am the Lord." (Lev. xix. 32.)

Thirdly : *That neither age nor position exempts sin from being punished.* The bears destroyed 42 children of Bethel. Rich and poor, high and low, old and young must be punished for their transgressions. God is no respecter of persons. The Holy One does not punish sin now exactly in the same way as he did

under the Jewish economy, viz., by special visitation ; nevertheless, upon close inspection, we cannot avoid believing the fact that we have seen individuals and families withering under the temporal punishments of heaven. However that is an exception, because we find ungodliness thrive, when virtue suffers. The plan ordained by eternal justice is, to enter all the evil actions upon the book of God's remembrance until the day of final judgment, and what a large amount will have accumulated from the days of youth to those of old age. Yea, so great a sum that the interminable ages of eternity will be too short a period for the sinner to pay it. "Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." (Matt. v. 26.) We notice—

II. THE EVENT AS REGARDS THE PROPHET. Many sentimental fault-finders blame the prophet for his severity and want of charity for the delinquents. Ridicule is a keen weapon which never fails to wound. It is a match that will surely fire the gas of self-love and cause a tremendous explosion in the social world. A man can sooner forgive everyone than the person who tries to make him appear ridiculous ; and what could have been more irritating to Elisha than to hear these urchins hollowing after him ?

First : *It is dangerous to persecute God's people.* No weapon that is formed against them shall prosper, whether it be the stocks or the burning faggots, the Pope or the drunken vagabond. Seeing godly men in trouble, we might think that God is angry with them, but that is a great mistake. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye. See Pharaoh, Haman, Sennacherib, Herod, &c.

Secondly : *That religion does not deprive a man of the right of self-defence.* Some people seem to think that a Christian must endure every species of injustice without uttering a word of protest. It is really lamentable to hear the world talk of a religious man if he dares in a manly way to claim his rights. If Christianity required its votaries to resign their rights as men and citizens, it would soon lose its hold on the mind of intelligent men. Who could believe for a moment that such a system had come from a wise and benevolent God ? Religion was intended to multiply our joys and intensify our happiness, which could not be the case if we had no shelter from the caprice of

wicked men. Paul's assertion of his rights as a Roman citizen at Philippi is an example. After enduring many stripes and the stocks, in the inner prison, the magistrates at last let them go. "But Paul said unto them, they have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out." (Acts xvi. 37.) And the magistrates came and brought them out. So let us have a masculine Christianity to confront oppression and wrong wherever found, provided we do it decently and in order.

Thirdly: *That the kindest nature when aroused is the fiercest.* In reading the history of the prophet we are struck with the generosity of his nature. When Elijah found him ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, he gave up all at once to follow Him; but before he departed he slew a yoke of oxen, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. He saved the two sons of the widow from captivity by multiplying the oil. He raised from the dead the Shunammite's son, and restored him to his bereaved mother. He healed the leprosy of Naaman gratis, and saved the blinded Syrians, though they were enemies; "Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." Yet the man that did all these acts of kindness, indignantly bequeathed the leprosy of Naaman to be an everlasting inheritance to his covetous servant Gehazi and his offspring. He cursed the children of Bethel and called bears to destroy them. Oil, when poured into our wounds, heals them, but when set on fire in a warehouse it will hasten the general destruction of property. The mild temper of the son of Saphat was fired by the sparks of anger, and destroyed forty-two children. These two elements of kindness and severity co-exist in the character of the Saviour. The kind and gentle eye that now quickens them that "are dead in trespasses and sins," will dart the arrows of death to the impenitent in the day of judgment. Now he is full of grace and truth, then will be manifested the "wrath of the Lamb." Now he invites in the winning accents of love: "Come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "The spirit and the bride say come, and whoever will let him take of the water of life freely."

*Abersychan.*

W. ALONZO GRIFFITHS.

# The Pith of Renowned Sermons.

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## BISHOP HALL.

*Subject: CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.*

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live.”—Gal. ii. 20.

**H**E that once was tossed in the confluence of two seas, was once no less straitened in his resolutions betwixt life and death. Neither doth my text argue him in any other case here; as there he knew not whether he should choose, or here he knew not whether he had. “I am crucified,” there he is dead; yet “I live,” there he is alive again; “yet not I,” there he lives not; “but Christ in me,” there he more than lives. See here then both a Lent and an Easter; a Lent of mortification, “I am crucified with Christ;” an Easter of resurrection and life, “I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” The Lent of my text will now be sufficient: wherein my speech shall pass through three stages of discourse.

I. CHRIST CRUCIFIED.—Christ’s cross is the first lesson of our infancy, worthy to be our last, and all. “*Grande crucis sacramentum,*” as Ambrose writes; this is the greatest wonder that ever earth or Heaven yields. Ruffinus tells us that among the sacred characters of the Egyptians the cross was anciently one, which was said to signify eternal life; hence their learned sort were contented to and confirmed in the faith. Surely we know that, in God’s hieroglyphics, eternal life is both represented and exhibited to us by the cross. That the cross of Christ was made of the tree of life, a slip whereof the angels gave to Adam’s son, out of Paradise, is but a Jewish legend; Galatine may believe it, not we. But that it is made of the tree of life to all believers we are sure. Had not our Saviour died, He could have been no Saviour for us; had not our Saviour died we could not have lived. But this, though the sum of the Gospel, is not the main drift of my text. From Christ crucified turn your eyes to—

II. PAUL CRUCIFIED. You hear of him dying by the sword—hear him speak of dying by the cross, and see his moral, spiritual, living crucifixion. Our apostle is two men, Saul and Paul—the old man and the new. In respect of the old man, he is crucified, and dead to the law of sin; so as that sin is dead in him; neither is it otherwise with every other regenerate. Sin hath a body, as well as the man hath. “Who shall deliver me from this body of death?”—a body that hath limbs and parts. “Mortify your earthly members,” saith our apostle—the sinful limbs that are made of “corruption, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection,” &c. The head of sin is wicked devices; the heart of sin, wicked desires; the hands and feet of sin, our wicked execution; the tongue of sin, wicked words; the eyes of sin, lustful apprehensions; the forehead of sin, impudent profession of evil; the back of sin, a strong supportation and maintenance of evil. All this body of sin is not only put to death, but to shame also; so as it is dead with the disgrace, “I am crucified.” St. Paul speaks not thus singularly of himself, but in the person of the renewed. Sin doth not, cannot live a vital and vigorous life in the regenerate. Sin and grace cannot more stand together in their strength, than life and death. Every Christian is a crucified man. God is not mocked; you must either kill or die—kill your sins, or else they will be sure to kill your souls—apprehend, arraign, condemn them; fasten them to the tree of shame; and if they be not dead already, break their legs and arms, disable them to all offensive actions, as was done to the thieves in the Gospel, so shall you say, “I am crucified with Christ.”

III. CHRIST AND PAUL CRUCIFIED TOGETHER. It is but a cold word this, “I am crucified;” it is the company that quickens it. He that is the Life gives it life, and makes both the word and act glorious.

There are many crucified, but not with Christ. Thus is—

(α) *The covetous and ambitious man.*

He plaits a crown of thorny cares for his own head; he pierces his hands and feet with toilsome undertakings; he drencheth himself with the vinegar and gall of discontent, &c. Thus is—

(β) *The envious man.*

He needs no other gibbet than another man's property. This man is crucified, but to Achitophel's cross, not Christ's. Thus it is with—

(*v*) *The desperate man.*

He is crucified with his own distrust, he pierceth his own heart with a deep killing sorrow. This is Judas's cross, not Christ's. Thus it is with—

(*g*) *The superstitious man.*

He is professedly mortified. He useth his body as an enemy. He lies upon thorns with the Pharisees; little-ease is his lodging with Simeon; the stone is his pillow with Jacob; tears his food with exiled David; he lanceth his flesh with the Baalites. Another not crucified with Christ is—

(*e*) *The traitor and the felon.*

Such have the cross of Barabbas, or the two malefactors.

The true crucifixion is with Christ. There is no benefit where there is no partnership. St. Austin gives all the dimensions of the cross of Christ. The latitude, he makes in the transverse; this pertains to good works, because on this His hands were stretched. The length, from the ground to the transverse; this is attributed to His longanimity and persistence; for on this His body was stayed and fixed, &c. The first Adam brought in death to all mankind; but at last actually died for none but himself. The second Adam died for mankind, and brought life to all believers.

*Bristol.*

URIJAH R. THOMAS.



## *Variations on Themes from Scripture.*

### *Subject: DIVERS WEIGHTS AND DIVERS MEASURES.*

“Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord. . . . Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord; and a false balance is not good.—Prov. xx. 10, 23.

TWICE in one chapter of the Book of Proverbs is it declared that divers weights are an abomination to the Lord. The term is an emphatic one, and the iteration is emphatic. “Divers weights and divers measures, both of them are alike

abomination to the Lord." "Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord ; and a false balance is not good." A stone and a stone—as the Hebrew has it—of unequal weight ; an ephah and an ephah, of diverse capacity ; these are branded as the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked. Trade tricksters are not called highly respectable in Scripture, whatever they may be called in police reports, or in the trade.

"A serious Toyman in the city dwelt,  
Who much concern for his religion felt ;"

is not the tale told by Crabbe in the "Struggles of Conscience ?" and how this "professing" tradesman sought to justify to himself his trade trickeries, without essaying to be very much better than his fellows—the highly respectable and worthy among them, at least :

"Worthy I mean, and men of good report,  
And not the wretches who with conscience sport.  
There's Bice, my friend, who passes off his grease  
Of pigs for bears', in pots a crown a-piece ;  
His conscience never checks him when he swears  
The fat he sells is honest fat of bears :  
And so it is, for he contrives to give  
A drachm to each—'tis thus that tradesmen live :  
Now, why should you and I be over-nice—  
What man is held in more repute than Bice ?"

A caustic censor some time ago took to task the cotton lords, so called, in respect of their art and practice of Leicester and Manchester measure—singling out, for this purpose, a firm whose "Persian thread" had come under the scrutiny of a Vice-Chancellor's Court, and who were said to be rather model men than otherwise, and enjoying a name for strict and scrupulous honesty. "Scripture says something about giving serpents for fish, and stones for bread ; but we daresay that many tradesmen sleep through these wholesome lessons, utterly disregarding their moral force, and the Vice-Chancellor's denunciation of selling wood for cotton." "A Persian baker is nailed by his ears to his own door-post, for a system of trade which we own ourselves unable to distinguish in morality from that of the proprietors of the famous Persian thread." In answer to this, the maxim *caveat emptor* was applied by apologists for the trade ; the real fault, they allege, is in the consumer, who will have a

cheap article. “*Populus vult decipi, et decipitur*,”—on which showing, the whole charge of adulteration, and of the wickedness of selling worsted and silk for silk, shoddy for broad-cloth, and sloe-juice for vine wine, is held to amount to nothing. But Cicero’s rule is, that every thing should be disclosed, in order that a purchaser may be ignorant of nothing which the seller knows: “*Omnia patefacienda, ut nihil quod venditor, norit emptor ignoret* ;” and then the maxim, *caveat emptor*, holds good. Few people have leisure for investigating the real quality and quantity of their purchases. It is truly said, that if a man wants quietly to go about his day’s business, it is as well for him, at breakfast time, to abstain from examining the tea-leaves. “The tavern-keeper considered that if the liquor he sold were black, and made people drunk, it answered all the essential conditions of port-wine.” So, it is added, the baker might say that his loaves are white, and fill the stomach ; and if this argument be not quite conclusive, there is the irrefragable fact that he occupies the corner-house in the street in which we live, and that other bakers are further distant, and, besides, sell a composition of about equal merit. Swift, in the Drapier Letters, urges a plan—Utopian in effect—by which the confidence of customers might be ensured ; “so that if I sent a child for a piece of stuff of a particular colour and fineness, I should be sure not to be deceived ; . . . . for, besides the trouble of going from shop to shop, an ignorant customer runs the hazard of being cheated in the price and goodness of what he buys, being forced to an unequal combat with a dexterous and dishonest man in his own calling.” In another pamphlet the Dean says of those whom his friend Pope has stigmatized under the type of—

“A tradesman meek, and very much a liar,”

that the dread of God’s anger is a motive of small force among them ; and so he does not enlarge upon *that*.

It is only necessary, remarks Mr. Emerson, to ask a few questions as to the progress of the articles of commerce from the fields where they grew, to our houses, to become aware that we “eat and drink, and wear perjury and fraud in a hundred commodities.” “Our shoes,” complained Mr. Carlyle a quarter of a century since, “are vamped up falsely to meet the market :

behold the leather only *seemed* to be tanned ; my shoes melt under me to rubbishy pulp, and are not veritable mud-defying shoes, but plausible vendible similitudes of shoes." And elsewhere, on the subject of "devil's dust" in Yorkshire cloth : "Yorkshire cloth ! why the very paper I now write on is made, it seems, partly of plaster-lime well smothered, and obstructs my writing." Another popular writer charges British merchants of all grades with combining to prey upon the consumer, who is the only sufferer in the end ; and he says of the poor sempstress, "about whom so much wordy philanthropy has been talked by these very gentlemen," that she, perhaps, is their most melancholy victim, buying the thread that snaps in her hand, and those delusive reels which contain so small an allowance of cotton to so large an allowance of wood.

Christian critics have been fain to admire in Mohammed the vigour and emphasis with which he inculcated a noble fairness and sincerity in dealing. "Oh, merchants," would he say, "falsehood and deceit are apt to prevail in traffic ; purify it, therefore, with alms ; God is incensed by deceit in dealing. . . . He who sells a defective thing, concealing its defect, will provoke the anger of God, and the curses of the angels." The British merchant was once a name of honour, in a land whose merchants were princes ; and *noblesse oblige*. But the name has been dragged through the mire for many a long year. He has been accused before now, observes one censor, of systematically defrauding his creditors, but he was preying upon his debtors all the while, in a twofold degree. "He is double-edged, and cuts in both ways. He has gathered with his right hand and with his left. The traditional cunning of the Hebrew, the reputed mendacity of the Greek, he unites and outdoes." Burns was flying at small game when he contemptuously asked himself,

"Do ye envy the city gent,  
Behint a kist to lie and sklent?"

But the mendacity and malpractice denounced allow of a disastrously wide application. Not but that every age has its recognised offenders in this sort, from Solomon's day downwards. A reviewer of the *Monumenta Franciscana* remarks that the readers of "Maud" may be comforted (or sorry) to hear that if

there are tricks in trade now, the “smooth-faced, snub-nosed rogue,” who wields the “cheating yard-wand” in our day, had his prototypes in the fourteenth century :—

“ *Si status conspicimus, nullus excusatur,  
Quod in shopis venditur, male mensuratur,  
Quilibet perjuris vel fraude lucratur,* ” &c.

But it was reserved, apparently, for our own age to merit in full the bad eminence of attaining such a pitch of refinement, so the *Quarterly Review* phrases it, “in the art of falsification of elementary substances,” that the very articles used to adulterate are adulterated; so that while one tradesman is picking the pockets of his customers, a still more cunning rogue is, unknown to himself, deep in his own. This professional expositor of the adulterations of food supposed the world at large to have almost forgotten Accum’s celebrated “Death in the Pot”—a new generation having sprung up since that was written, and fraudulent tradesmen and manufacturers going on in silence, and till lately in security, falsifying the food and picking the pockets of the people; until the *Lancet* Commissioner, “like a modern Al Raschid, perambulated the town himself, or sent trustworthy agents to purchase articles, upon all of which the inexorable microscope was set to work”—the precision of its results leaving no appeal. In his peroration on the gross fraud that reigns throughout the British public commissariat, Dr. Wynter exclaims that, as with a set of monkeys, every man’s hand is seen in his neighbour’s dish: the baker takes in the grocer, the grocer defrauds the publican, the publican victimizes the pickle manufacturer, and the pickle maker poisons and fleeces the rest. One is reminded of what Circe placed before the unhappy men, her guests and victims—

“ *Milk newly press’d, the sacred flour of wheat,  
And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat ;  
But venom’d was the bread, and mix’d the bowl,  
With drugs of force to darken all the soul.* ”

Or of what the polysyllabic peer says in one of Mrs. Gore’s fictions—“None but a Medea would condemn her offspring to promiscuous confectionary in this land of chemical substitutes. Muriatic acid and corrosive sublimate form the staple material of our *pralines* and *gimblettes*.” To the Laureate’s scathing

onslaught against trade tricksters reference has been already made ; nor can any tractate on the subject well dispense with recalling his vigorous lines : the bitterness of the query, "Who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word ?" and the vehement invectives against an age—

" When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie ;  
Peace in her vineyard—yes !—but a company forges the wine.

" And the vitriol madness flashes up in the ruffian's head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yells of the trampled wife,  
While chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life."

Some remaining variations on the same theme must be referred to another section, under another heading.

FRANCIS JACOX, B.A.

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## *The Preacher's Dissecting Room.*

" I SPEAK AS TO WISE MEN."

C. J. VAUGHAN, D.D.

**A** MAN who refuses a bishopric, such as bishoprics are in the Established Church of this land, is decidedly out of the common. There may be many men who conscientiously believe that they would do so, if the offer of such a prize should happen to come within reach ; and there are some, we have no manner of doubt, who so far give proof of their sincerity in thus thinking, that they never take any step, however indirectly, towards securing such an offer. Further still, there are certainly many who voluntarily cut themselves off from the very possibility of such a prospect. All persons who enter the ministry in a non-episcopal communion may be said to do this ; and so, of course, may all those who, with some desire for God's glory, and some degree of aptness for teaching, nevertheless turn away from the ministry altogether to merely secular life. But no one of all these refusals costs the recusant very much. Judged by the principles of commerce—and commerce may perhaps be defined as the art of estimating things at their real worth—

there is nothing relinquished in any of these cases on which any definite price could be set. No speculator would offer anything for the chance given up. But it is otherwise when a man of mark, having selected an episcopal community from conscientious motives, has a mitre actually placed in his hand with a request to see how it fits. If, after taking it out from the ecclesiastical band-box, and giving it a fair amount of inspection, he then quietly replaces and returns it to the well-known establishment in Downing-street, as "declined with thanks," his share in such a transaction is far from an every-day case. He has given up that which was of real value to him from almost every possible point of view. As a direct question, for example, of money, it was worth a good deal, though not by any means so much as appears, or as is commonly thought. As a question of position it is probably worth even more. For those who love rank and dignity, the status of an Anglican bishop is no despicable pre-ferment. And as a question of influence and usefulness, to such a man as we are now supposing, it is worth more again. For a man of this kind, with such an opening before him—especially if it be presented to him in the plain path of God's providence, and without any seeking of his own—to refuse to avail himself of it is at once a very unusual and a highly responsible step. We are very far, therefore, from blaming those who, in such circumstances, cannot make up their minds to such a step. But all the more, on this very account, do we honour the self-denial, and courage, and clear-sightedness of the man who can speak out his *Nolo episcopari*, and adhere to it, too, although the dazzling and enviable prize is actually thrust on his hands, and a whole multitude of friendly voices are urging him to accept.

If rumour speaks truth in the present instance, the man whose style of preaching we are now to examine, has distinguished himself more than once in this same remarkable way. This, of itself, lends no common interest to our present inquiry. And all the rest that is publicly known of him increases that interest much. Dr. C. J. Vaughan, the present Master of the Temple, before that, Vicar of Doncaster, when he was most successful as a parish clergyman, and where he attracted around him a large number of earnest young men preparing for the ministry; and, before that again, eminently successful as Master of Harrow School; is a man especially to be heard. As a scholar, a teacher, a pastor, a preacher, he has been fully tried and approved; and, as we have already noted, he has also been offered a bishopric, and has declined it. Most men with such qualifications would either have thought themselves fit for such a post without persuasion; or would easily have been persuaded to think so by

their friends. There is something very uncommon in being too modest for the one thing, and yet too self-reliant for the other.

We think the peculiarities of Dr. Vaughan's character are traceable in the peculiarities of his preaching. For instance in the volume of sermons on which we chiefly propose to speak,\* there is evidently a remarkable degree of conscientiousness in adhering to his subject, and great loyalty to his text. He seems to have laid it down as a principle—and a very sound principle it is in the main—that he was bound to bring out, as much as may be, the full and exact meaning of every part of the whole Scripture before him; and to this principle, with a certain kind of characteristic tenacity, he seems accordingly to adhere. Like a gardener who has hired a given plot of garden ground for a time, "forsaking all other, he keeps him only unto that," and seeks to make the best of every portion of it for that time. The sermon on the "Nunc Dimittis" is a fair illustration of this point. We rather object, indeed, to the title; for it is not so much the song of Simeon, as the whole history of Simeon as related by St. Luke, that is the subject of the sermon. But the whole of that subject, as it stands, and nothing except that subject (we had almost said), is discussed by the preacher. Beginning with a notice of the comparative fewness of the particulars given to us in the inspired accounts of our Lord's infancy and childhood, and inferring thence the importance and preciousness of all the particulars so given, we are well prepared for giving heed to what is said respecting this one. Then with much careful method and arrangement, every verse and every word of the whole history is brought in order before us, and none is allowed to pass without a painstaking elucidation of its meaning, or exhibition of its force. Simeon's character, as both "just" and "devout," and "just" because "devout"—also as waiting for the "consolation of Israel," a consolation so much needed then by all, and especially by men such as he—the precise nature of this consolation—the promise he had received respecting it—and the way in which he came to the temple, and found it at last fulfilled; all this is brought out and set before us with a beautiful reverence and fidelity. The same is true of the song itself, which forms the next division of his subject; and of the prophecy following the song, which is dealt with in his third and last division. We do not find, indeed, in this whole Scripture a single expression of moment on which something is not said.

\* "Christ the Light of the World," by C. J. Vaughan, D.D. Strahan, London.

Wherever a clause is at all dark, an explanation of it is attempted ; wherever the connection is not obvious, an elucidation of it is provided ; whenever there is anything requiring special consideration, special consideration is sure to be given to it—nothing that ought to be noticed is pretermitted of design. Such, we have found, is the conviction produced on our mind.

The following extract will help to show the kind of thing that we mean :—

“3. We have yet to speak of the prophecy.”

\* While Joseph and the Mother were still marvelling at the words spoken by the old man concerning Jesus, he turned to them, and with a solemn blessing first pronounced upon those who were privileged to hold so near a place on earth to the Saviour of mankind, spoke these words to his Mother only :—

“Behold, this [child]”—or, in the original, “this Person”—“is set (or appointed) for the fall and rising of many in Israel.” He is placed, or laid, as a firmly planted rock, with a twofold result or purpose: the fall of some, the rising of others.

Two passages of the prophet Isaiah, the one from the 8th and the other from the 28th chapter, seem to be here brought together; as also in the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in the 2nd chapter of the First Epistle of St. Peter.

God places this child in Zion as a precious corner stone; a sure foundation.

Whosoever will, may build upon Him the house of his habitation, and rise into a holy temple, safe from the storms of time and the devastations of judgment.

He is set for the rising of many.

But, if men will not thus use Him, as the foundation-stone of a safe and sure dwelling; then (according to the other passage) they will find Him a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence: He will be like an obstructing rock in their path—even to them who stumble at the Word, being disobedient.

God will not move Christ out of the way, because men are perverse enough to stumble over Him.

This child is set, by a hand not of man, to be either for the rising (if they will have it so), or else for the fall (if they will have it so), of many in Israel.

God gives the Saviour: blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Him.

A solemn responsibility! We must either rise by Christ, or fall—which we will!

“And for a sign spoken against.”

A sign is a signal. In the Scripture use it denotes something or some one pointing to God ; to God's being, and to God's working.

Thus a miracle is a sign. It points to God. It says, God is at work : this hath God spoken, for this hath God done.

And thus Christ himself is a sign. He came upon earth to point to God. He came, to say by His words, and by His works, and by His character, and by His sufferings, “Behold your God.”

But this sign, like every other, may be, and commonly is, gainsaid, or spoken against. For one who accepts it—for one who, because of Christ sees and believes in, and lives for God—many cavil ; many reject, and many neglect the Gospel.

This in all times. But most of all, when He was Himself among men. Then indeed gainsaying ran on into open violence; and the Son of man, despised and rejected of men, was at last given up into the hands of wicked men to suffer death upon a cross of anguish and infamy.

Such is the warning, uttered in the ears of his mother, over the little infant lying still and helpless in the arms of the aged saint. "Yea," he adds, "a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." She who is now rejoicing in the blessedness of being her Lord's mother, must learn that no one comes so near Christ, without partaking in His sufferings.

She will hear with sorrow the contradiction of sinners against Him; she will see Him outcast, destitute, spurned, forsaken; she will at last stand by his cross, and drink to the dregs with Him the cup of sorrow. The "sign spoken against" will bring anguish with Him to his Mother's spirit; her heart will be rent and lacerated as she sees Him pierced and tortured, as she beholds Him slowly pouring out His soul in a bitter and shameful death.

But all this shall be, all this must be, in order "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

By their treatment of Christ himself, men will shew what they are. The veil will be stripped off from them—such is the figure—by their own language and their own conduct towards Christ.

By their estimate of his character, by their appreciation or disparagement of his holy life, and mighty works, and divine doctrine—by their acceptance or rejection of Him whose appeal was ever to the conscience of man, as in the sight of a heart-searching God—men will disclose their own disposition; will shew whether they love the world, whether they echo its lying voice, whether they desire darkness lest their deeds should be reproved—or whether, on the other hand, they are brave to see, and bold to confess the truth, whether they have an ear to hear the voice of God, and a will to follow Him wheresoever He goeth.

But, worst of all, as the end draws on, and the life of holiness is closing in the death of martyrdom. Then, even more than in earlier days, were the feelings of men tested, the thoughts of hearts revealed, by their dealing with the suffering and the crucified.

The high priests plot and blaspheme, Pilate vacillates and gives way, the soldiers part among them the garments, the people stand beholding, "Judas despairs, Peter repents, Joseph of Arimathea becomes courageous, Nicodemus comes by day, the centurion confesses, one thief blasphemeth, the other prays, men faint and flee, women out of weakness are made strong," a sword pierces the heart of the mother, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Even thus has it been in all time. For all time the words were uttered: it is by their treatment of Jesus, in Himself and in His people, in His word, in His church, in His sacraments, in His spirit, that men shew decisively, before God, before one another, before themselves (if they will behold it), what manner of spirit they are of.

The whole sermon—the whole book—the whole man—is like this. The preacher treats every word as though it were a fortress in an enemy's country, not in any case to be left uncaptured, or, at any rate, uninvested in making his advance. And the result is much the same as with a general who is careful on such points. His advance, if not always rapid, is all the more sure. There is a great sense of solidity and power in all his movements; and a

strong feeling of security and satisfaction to those who are under his guidance for the time. One likes to listen to a man who shirks nothing that comes in his way ; who has evidently seen and weighed all the difficulties of the subject ; and whose conclusions have all been arrived at, not by avoiding or ignoring those difficulties, but by looking them all in the face. " You see all the points that are now before us ; you see what I think respecting all of them ; you see why I think as I do." It is an immense advantage to a preacher when his method of treating Holy Scripture is such as virtually to speak to men in this way. They are not only glad, in that case, to hear him ; but they are predisposed, also, to believe in him. What, indeed, can a man desire and attempt for himself, in the way of candid inquiry, which such a " faithful steward of the mysteries of God " will not actually assist him in securing ?

There is, also, another special advantage in this manner of exposition. Such open candour and courage are always of advantage to one who seeks to persuade, be his subject what it may. This seems part of the meaning of the old saying, that a really successful orator must be a good man. There must be an impression of sincerity, at the least, if a man wishes to persuade ; for who will believe a messenger who seems to doubt his own message, or, how can faith pass from the speaker to the hearer, when the speaker himself is without it ? But to insure this appearance of sincerity there is but one effectual way, and that is to secure the reality of it beforehand, or, what amounts, in this respect, to much the same thing, " to be a good man." Such is the advantage, therefore, of transparent dealing, be the orator's topic what it may. But when that topic is of a Scriptural nature, there is a still further advantage. For the especial strength and power of that special kind of oratory, to which we give the name of preaching, lies in the subject it deals with ; and depends, therefore, on the fidelity with which that subject is treated. There are other subjects in which a man is powerful in proportion as he leaves them behind him. In many works of imagination or wit, *e.g.*, in which the object is to dazzle and amuse, the genius and invention of the writer takes some trivial or insignificant topic or thought, and gives it a degree of glory to which it can lay no claim of itself ; and in proportion, therefore, as he does this, his object is attained. But the object of a preacher who aims at true success in his vocation is not to dazzle or amuse, but to impress and convince, to arouse the conscience, to enlighten and satisfy the judgment, to instil holy affections, to change the desires and the will. And all these are things which his own unaided knowledge and thoughts will never enable him

to effect; but will rather prevent his effecting, if they are employed in any way as a substitute for his only legitimate work, viz., the bringing into immediate contact of the Word of God and man's heart. All else but this is to Him like the glittering armour of Saul when placed upon David—a hindrance and an encumbrance—a show of power, but no more. A preacher, in short, who is “mighty in the Scriptures” is the only preacher of real might.

There are one or two important cautions, however, to be borne in mind on this point.

A man is not necessarily mighty in the Scriptures because he takes a large portion of Scripture to discuss; or even because he adheres to it very closely; or because the passages of Scripture adduced by him are very many in number. On some of these points we consider Dr. Vaughan to be rather a warning than an example. He has a way of being faithful to Scripture which is not altogether effective. We will endeavour in our next article to show in what sense we mean this; and also to point out, on the other side, a certain marked peculiarity in his preaching, which, in our individual opinion, is the secret of great power in his case.

MATHEMATICUS, M. A.,  
Formerly Chaplain of Trinity Coll., Camb.



## Biblical Criticism.

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come [אֶבְאָא חִמְתָּה כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם]: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.”—Haggai ii. 6, 7.

(Continued from p. 275.)

(2.) The employment of בָּהָר, *bhārū*, in the plural, although its nominative, הַמְּדֹתָה, is in the singular, is easily explicable. For the word מְדֹתָה, *chēmdāth*, is here doubtless employed as a true collective, and is to be understood of the Messiah as being the person in whom the desires of all nations for deliverance find

alone their true centre—in whom they are all gathered up, as it were, into one burning and brilliant focus. All those noblest yearnings of humanity, which have in every age and in all lands been begotten of an agonizing sense of moral need, really and truly pointed on to the coming Saviour, and to Him alone, whether the individual Christ stood revealed to the personal consciousness or not. And hence the Messiah is “the desired of all nations”—in Him all these yearnings and aspirations are concentrated and collected—in Him the nobler and better things to come, often dimly longed for, find their most splendid pledge and realization. The word *chēmdāth* is, therefore, a true collective, and accordingly the verb in the plural is perfectly regular. It may be, too, that the plural form of the verb is intended, especially as *chēmdāth* pluralised could not have borne that construction as a sort of *plur. majestalis* (cf. Gen. i. 26), נָאשֵׁה אָדָם בְּצָלָמֵנוּ, *nā'asēh ādhām betsālmēnū*—we will make man in our image, &c., where the *plur. majestalis* appears in the verb.

(3.) This interpretation agrees also with the contents of the prophecy. It does not contradict verse 3, where the later temple is said to be “as nothing” in comparison of the former. Compare Ezra iii. 12. It allows the inferiority in respect of material splendour of the second temple. But while allowing this, it still discovers how “the glory of this latter house” was to become “greater than of the former.” It was to occur as the prophet Malachi indicates, by means of the advent into “this latter house” of the Lord—the Messiah—“the messenger of the covenant.” Hence the exultant promise contained in verse 4—a promise which was to console the children of the captivity for the visible inferiority of the second temple. It was thus that God would “fill this house with glory” (verse 7); for though it might lack the presence of the *shekinah*, yet it was to witness the presence of Him who was, as the aged Simeon with the infant Saviour yet in his arms, exclaimed, “to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel.”

With this interpretation, too, the magnificent exordium of the prophet is in perfect and beautiful harmony, as seen in 6th and 7th verses. The commotions and upheavals therein described, but fitly preluded the advent of the eternal Word—the King of Glory—the only begotten Son of the Father. And if it is pre-

tended, as Rosenmüller and Maurer affirm, that the temple which witnessed the presence of Christ was not the second but a third, it is enough to reply with Grotius that it was never customary with the Jews to speak of a third temple, but that such structure at Jerusalem, from the circumstance that Herod's temple was a restoration, not a reconstruction—was commonly, from the time of Zerubbabel to that of Vespasian, designated the second temple.\*

(4.) This interpretation requires no arbitrary construction of the succeeding genitive, as in the exegeses of Hitzig and Maurer.

(5.) This interpretation aptly harmonises with the particular verb and the particular form of the verb employed in the text.

(6.) With this interpretation agrees, moreover, the remarkable promise contained in verse 9—a promise occurring in close logical and grammatical connexion with the alleged superior “glory of this latter house.” “The glory of this latter house,” we there read, “shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts; and in this place [דֵּיןְךָנָהָה, *ubb̄māgōm*] will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.” Here the LORD of hosts was to manifest Himself in the second temple, and that too in the act of giving peace. How was this fulfilled? It was fulfilled when Jehovah in the person of the Messiah appeared in that temple publishing salvation—proclaiming the new covenant—the covenant of peace, of which, as Malachi had said (iii. 1) He was “the messenger.” This was the view of Grotius, as may be seen in the passage above cited.

Taking the passage then as prophetic of the Messiah in agreement with the opinion of the Jews and of the best Christian commentators, it is found as a whole to be perfectly coherent and self-consistent. This is in fact the only interpretation which the prophecy will admit. But once deprive it of its Messianic reference, and, as we have shown, the most hopeless confusion is introduced. Indeed the circumstance is not to be overlooked that the interpreters who deny to this passage a Messianic reference, are not agreed what meaning to substitute in the place of that which they have sought to overturn. Nay, not only are

they not agreed, but they are absolutely in antagonism. Hitzig refutes Maurer; and Maurer in turn refutes Hitzig; while both by their erroneous exegesis are in open contradiction of the contents of the prophecy and the facts of history. The passage, we maintain then, is Messianic—clearly and indisputably Messianic. Our authorized version has expressed its meaning with sufficient accuracy. And we may remain assured that upon this point at the least modern research need not for a moment unsettle our faith.

*Memel, Prussia.*

DR. CLARK, M.A., F.R.A.S.,

*British Chaplain.*

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## The Preacher's Finger-Post.

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### THE WELL-BEING OF HUMANITY ESSENTIALLY DEPENDENT UPON CHRIST.

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it, and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.”—Ephes. v. 23—30.

EXEGETICAL remarks on this passage will be found in another part of this number under the

heading of “Ideal Matrimony.” The mutual duties of wife and husband form the subject of this passage, and this subject we shall discuss in our next number. But the subject which we shall now employ the words to illustrate is, “*The vital connection of Christ with the well-being of humanity.*” The words indicate several things that shew this. What are they?

I. HIS SPIRITUAL RULERSHIP. “Christ is the *Head* of the Church.” There is no spiritual redemption in the case, either of the individual, the country, or the race, where there is not a thorough submission to the will of Christ as the moral master of souls. In the experience of every saved man He is “the Head.” He is the animating, guiding, controlling Spirit. He brings into captivity every thought to

Himself. The submission must be—

First: *Voluntary*. All will be forced one day to submit to Him. His enemies shall be made His footstool.

Secondly: *Entire*. There must be the surrender of all the powers of the soul.

Thirdly: *Continuous*. Not occasional, but perpetual. There is no well-being for man without this submission.

Another thing in the text concerning Christ, which is essential to man's well-being, is—

II. HIS SELF-SACRIFICE. “Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” “He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world.” “He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity.” Everywhere does Holy Writ ascribe redemption to the self-sacrificing love of Christ. His self-sacrifice,—

First: *Was disinterested*. Human history furnishes instances of self-sacrifice made for selfish purposes and ends. Not so with Christ. He had nothing personal to gain by it. His was heroic and magnanimous in the highest degree. “I lay down my life for the sheep; no man taketh it from me; I lay it down of myself.” His self-sacrifice,—

Secondly: *Was divine*. All disinterested acts are not divine. Christ's sacrifice was *according to the divine will*, and *by the divine will*. “Lo, I

come to do thy will, oh God.” There never has been any spiritual redemption without this. This self-sacrifice of Christ is that which gives the Gospel power to subdue souls to His beneficent rule.

Another thing in the text concerning Christ, which is essential to man's well-being, is—

III. HIS MORAL CLEANSING. “That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

Observe here three things.

First: *The instrument of this cleansing*. “The washing of water by the word.” The word is the instrument,—and what is the word? The Gospel. Frequently is the cleansing power of souls ascribed to the Gospel. “Ye are clean through the word,” &c. “Sanctify them through the truth,” &c. “Ye are purified by your souls in obeying the truth,” &c. But is not soul-cleansing also ascribed to the *blood of Christ*? Yes. “The blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sins.” “Unto Him that washed us from our sins in His own blood.” But what is this blood of Christ but His self-sacrificing love, and what is the Gospel but the embodiment and revelation of this *self-sacrifice*. There is no contradiction, therefore. The Gospel is the blood of Christ. His blood circulates through all the veins of the great body of Christian truth. Observe here—

Secondly: *The completeness*

of this cleansing. "That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Without *spot*. Not the shadow of a stain of sin remaining. Without *winkle*. No indication whatever of age, but possessing the plumpness and bloom of youth. Without "blemish." No defect in any part, but morally perfect. "A glorious Church." Redeemed humanity, when perfected, He presents to Himself; He brings it near to Him, and exhibits its moral loveliness to the eye of an admiring universe. "So shall they be ever of the Lord."

Another thing in the text concerning Christ, which is essential to the well-being of man is—

**IV. HIS GRACIOUS NURTURING.** "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." "Nourisheth it and cherisheth it." The redeemed live on Him. He is to them the water of life, the bread that came down from heaven. To them "His flesh is meat indeed, His blood is drink indeed." The flesh and blood mean, of course, His *life*. And what was the life of Christ? *Self-sacrificing love*; and it is only as a man takes this into him that he gains those two things which food supplies—*strength* and *satisfaction*. Without self-sacrifi-

ficing love no man is either morally strong or morally satisfied. Selfishness makes souls weak and discontented in all worlds. "He nourisheth and cherisheth it." Aye, with more than a mother's love, with more than monarch's bounty.

Another thing in the text concerning Christ which is essential to the well-being of man is—

**V. HIS VITAL IDENTIFICATION.** "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." This means more than that He was the partaker of our nature, for He was "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh," and in this we rejoice. It means His vital nearness and constant sympathy. He feels that what is done for or against the least of His redeemed ones, is done for or against Himself. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" No attachment is so strong as that which binds Christ to the redeemed, and the redeemed to Him. The connection is closer than that which binds the limbs of men together. His disciples have suffered the mangling, the amputation, and even the burning of their limbs in consequence of their attachment to Him.

**CONCLUSION.**—The moral restitution of the world is essentially connected with Christ, and it is folly to expect the event apart from *Him*. Philosophy, science, civilization, these are powerless to effect

man's spiritual deliverance and true elevation. The world must be for ever damned without Christ.

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**MAN—HIS BIRTH, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION.**

"Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die."—1 Cor. xv. 36.

WITHOUT offering any preliminary remarks concerning the contents of this wonderful chapter, I shall take the verse as suggesting the great facts of man's existence.

I. **MAN'S BIRTH.** The text suggests, I do not say it was intended to teach, that man's *birth* is a *sowing of his existence in the earth*. The sowing of the grain of which the apostle speaks is not, I think, so analogous to the burial of his body as to the birth of his existence. The sowing of the grain takes place *before* its death. It dies after it is sown. But in the burial of the body the man has previously died. *Birth*, and not burial, then, must be considered as sown. Man, at birth, is sown into the earth like seed, in two respects. (1.) The seed existed before it was sown; man existed before he was born. (2.) The seed required sowing in order for its development, and man required *birth* into this world in order for the development of his powers. What the soil is to the seed the external universe is to the soul—the developing agent. As a seed, however,

man differs from all other germinant existences on this earth in several respects.

**First:** *He has a self-formative power.* The germs of all other life run into forms by the necessity of their nature. The grain has no power of determining what shape it shall take in its growth,—man has. Man has the power of determining whether he shall grow into a *beast*, a *fiend*, or an *angel*.

**Secondly:** *He has boundless possibilities.* All other germinant existences on earth exhaust themselves in their growth. The time comes when they reach their culmination, and decay sets in. Not so with man. He is a seed that shall grow for ever. At birth, then, we are sown into this world—immortal seeds we are all which the hand of the Great Husbandman scatters over the earth.

II. **MAN'S DEATH.** His death is here represented as a reduction of the body to earth, not the reduction of himself. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." In the grain it is not the germ, but the husk, the shell, which dies. The wrappage of the germ was made to rot. Nothing was necessary to the development of the life which it contained. The human *body* is the mere shell and wrappage of the man. It was made to die. Death is an essential element in the constitution of the

world. It is in all material existences. It has been said that one-seventh of our earth's crust is comprised of limestone, and limestone contains the sepulchres of departed existences. We feed on death, and by our own death become food for future existences. The husk is not the germ, the body is not the man. It is his house that must crumble, it is his garment that must wear out.

The verse presents—

**III. MAN'S RESURRECTION.** What is his resurrection? *A springing up of his being from the earth.* After the death of the grain there is a resurrection of the seed that comes forth into new forms of life and beauty. It is not the husk that rises, but the germ. After the burial of the body the man comes forth into new life. The body rots, the man rises. Whether Paul refers here to the resurrection of the *body* from the grave or not one thing is clear, that at death there is a real resurrection of the soul. As when the husks of the seed rot in the earth the seed itself is quickened, so when the body falls into the dust the soul springs forth into new life, a life of woe or bliss, according to its moral character. There is a resurrection, a standing up of every soul at death. "The dust returns to dust, the soul to God who gave it." Will the body itself rise from the grave after it has gone

to dust? It may, and we see sufficient evidence to enable us to cherish the cheering hope. Whether this be a delusion or not, one thing is certain—the soul rises up at the fall of the body to its dust, and this is a most real and solemn *resurrection*. We "Know that when the earthly house of this my tabernacle is dissolved, I have a building of God above, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

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#### MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LIFE.

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."—John ix. 4.

THESE are the words of Christ and they suggest truths of importance to us all.

**I. THERE IS A DIVINE PURPOSE IN EVERY MAN'S LIFE.** Christ said that God had sent Him into the world, and so He has sent every man that exists. We come into this world, not by accident, not by necessity, not by our own choice. Every man is sent here.

First: *Then he has a right to be here.* Who has a right to send him hence? Every man is sent here then.

Secondly: *Then he has some distinct mission.* What is it? The words suggest—

**II. THAT THERE IS A DIVINE WORK FOR EVERY MAN'S LIFE.** "The works of Him that sent me. What are the works which God requires us to do? Not works of any particular class,

intellectual or manual, mercantile or mechanical. All these works may either be the devil's works or God's, according to the spirit in which they are performed. The works of God are works prompted and controlled by supreme love to Himself and regard to the good of His universe. Whatsoever we do in word or deed we do all to the glory of God."

The words suggest—

### III. THAT THERE IS A DIVINE

LIMIT TO EVERY MAN'S LIFE.  
“While it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.” There is an appointed time for man upon the earth.

First: *It is very short.* It is a mere “day.” How brief is life!

Secondly: *Its business is very urgent.* In this day how much must be done, if it is ever done, There is business to be done in the day of our mortal life which cannot be done afterwards.



## Seeds of Sermons on the Book of Proverbs.

### REPUTATION AND RICHES.

“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.”—PROV. xxii. 1.

THE text must not be supposed to mean either of the two following things:—(1.) *That mere renown is a good thing in itself.* The love of fame is not the love of virtue, nor has it any virtue in it. And when it becomes a passion, as it often does, it is a heinous evil. It tramples on the rights of humanity, and often sheds the blood of nations. Even our great dramatist seems to have had this strong love within him. “I am not covetous for gold; but if it be a sin to covet honour, I am the most offending soul alive.” Nor must the text be supposed to mean (2.) *That mere renown is a better*

*thing to work for than wealth.* Of the two things, mere fame and mere wealth, the latter is to be preferred as an object of pursuit. Wealth, uncertain as it is, is more steadfast, and, transient as it is, is more enduring, than mere fame. Even Byron, who sought it, and found it too, pronounced it worthless.

“ ‘Tis as a snowball which derives assistance From every flake, and yet rolls on the same, Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow; But, after all, ‘tis nothing but cold snow.”

The fact is, the text does not point to mere fame at all, but to a *good* reputation; for though the word “good” is not in the original, it is evidently implied. What the writer means to say is,

that a good reputation is better than wealth. The text suggests two remarks :—

I. **THAT GREAT WEALTH IS GOOD.** “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.” He does not say that to choose great riches is not good—the opposite is implied. Great wealth is a blessing when rightly used. Its value is more frequently denounced from envy than from conviction. (1.) Wealth increases man’s sources of pleasure, and happiness is a good thing. The happy God made His universe to be happy. (2.) Wealth increases man’s means of improvement. It puts at his service books, leisure, halls of science, galleries of art, &c. (3.) Wealth increases his power of usefulness. It enables him to mitigate poverty, to dispel ignorance, ameliorate suffering, and advance all the interests of man. With it, he can rear asylums, hospitals, schools, churches, &c. Don’t despise wealth—get it if you can. In itself it is a good thing, and, rightly used, it is an immense blessing.

II. The text suggests **THAT A GOOD REPUTATION IS BETTER.** “A good name is rather to be chosen.” (1.) Because a good reputation implies the possession of something more valuable than secular wealth. That cannot be a valuable reputation that is undeserved, and contrary to the facts of a man’s moral life. It is a fiction—an impostor. A good reputation implies a good character—a character in harmony with the will of God. Such a character is infinitely more valuable than all the wealth of millionaires—all the splendour of kingdoms. It is intrin-

sic, imperishable wealth. (2.) Because a good reputation answers higher purposes than secular wealth. It yields higher pleasure to the possessor. A man who knows that he is universally respected, and feels that he deserves the world-wide fame he has obtained, has a pleasure that no worldly wealth can give him. General credit for what we do not possess is rather painful than pleasant; but credit for excellence of which we are conscious is indeed a pleasing thing. Next to the happiness of being good is the happiness of being recognised as such. The “loving favour” which goodness ensures transcends all the pleasures that “silver and gold” can possibly procure. A bad man may have great riches, but a good man only can have a truly “good name.” (3.) Because a good reputation can render us more useful than secular riches. The good man who is universally respected because of his goodness, has a free access to the souls of men. His opinions have authority and force. “The loving favour” which men have for him gives his thoughts and counsels a ready entrance to our hearts. Secular wealth does not do this. It often bolts the souls of men against its possessors. (4.) Because a good reputation is more inseparably connected with its possessor than secular wealth. Secular wealth has no vital connection with the man. The connection which it has is extrinsic and fleeting. It must leave him sooner or later. Such service as it renders is limited to earth. It is worthless beyond the grave. But a good reputation—a reputation founded on moral excellence of character

—is inseparable from man. The memory of the just is blessed. “The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.”

THE RICH AND POOR.

“The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.”—Prov. xxii. 2.

THE text leads us to consider three things—

I. The CIRCUMSTANTIAL DISTANCES between the rich and the poor. The rich and the poor appear in society to walk at a great distance from each other. In the circumstances of their birth they seem to be very distant. The one is down in the region of indigence, the other is up in the sphere of plenty. In the circumstances of education they seem distant. The poor are not allowed to mingle with the rich in schools. In the circumstances of their daily avocation they are distant. The poor are down in the valleys of manual and servile labour, often working as beasts of burden. The rich are at their lucrative professions and recreative amusements. In the circumstances of their death they seem to be distant. How different the external scenes of their death bed! How different, too, the grave in which they are interred! The difference between them is marked, even in the churchyard and cemeteries. In the circumstances of their worship they seem to be distant. The poor must sit in free seat, whilst the man with the “gold ring” in his cushioned pew, &c. Circumstantially the rich and the poor are very distant from each other in this world.

The text leads us to consider—

II. The REAL MEETING PLACES between the rich and the poor,

“They meet together.” Where do they meet? They meet—

First: *In the cardinal necessities of their being.* The essentials of life and health—air, water, food, light—are common to all. All meet at the common fountain of necessities. They meet—

Secondly: *In the common trials of human nature.* Sickness, disease, infirmities, decay, death—they all meet here. The small and the great meet in the grave. They descend the same region of darkness, loneliness, putrefaction. They meet—

Thirdly: *In the necessary conditions of human improvement.* (1.) Of intellectual improvement. Those conditions are, observation, comparison, research, reflection. In this walk the rich and the poor must meet. There is no separate path—no royal road to intellectual eminence. (2.) Spiritual improvement. “Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” are necessary conditions to spiritual improvement. There is only one way of salvation. They meet—

Fourthly: *At the bar of their judge.* The rich and the poor must stand alike before the tribunal of their judge.

The text leads us to consider—

III. THE GRAND RELATIONSHIP between the rich and the poor. What is that? Their relation to the Creator. “The Lord is the maker of them all.” They have not the same fathers, mothers, sisters, teachers, ministers, masters, but they have the same Creator.

First: *Before this common relationship all circumstantial distinctions vanish.* The greatest monarch on earth in the pre-

sence of the Creator is as insignificant as the meanest pauper.

Secondly: *Before this common relationship all souls should blend in worship.* The poor and the rich are alike bound to love Him supremely, to serve Him devotedly, to praise Him enthusiastically, and for ever.

#### THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH.

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."—Prov. xxii. 3.

Two things are here to be noticed—

I. THE PREVISION AND THE PROVIDENCE OF THE WISE. "The prudent foreseeth the evil." True wisdom is always associated with forecast. It describes the future. It sees the evil and the good that are there and on their way. The wise man does not live in the past, nor is he absorbed in the present, but he has regard to the approaching.

First: *He provides for the*

*secular evils which he foresees, such as commercial panics, bankruptcies, failing health, &c., and he makes timely preparations.*

Secondly: *He provides for the moral evils which he foresees—temptations, trials, death, judgment, and "he hideth himself."* He resorts to the true refuge, God.

II. THE RECKLESSNESS AND THE RUIN OF THE FOOLISH. "The simple pass on and are punished." Whilst the wise are like Noah, who, foreseeing the impending calamity, prepared an ark and saved himself and house, the foolish are like his contemporaries, pass heedlessly on, and are punished.

CONCLUSION: All men spiritually are acting the character either of the prudent or the simple. They are either foreseeing the evils in the future and preparing to meet them, or else they pass carelessly on to destruction.

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